

A NEW VISION FOR MISSION IN THE KOREAN CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

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The Protestant church in Korea has experienced enormous development over a period of 110 years. However, even though Protestant church growth in Korea has been remarkable, there are some problems in the evangelical work. These problems are a concentration on materialism and church growth, forfeiture of morality, and a split among the churches and denominations.

The purpose of this project is not only to examine the traditional evangelical work in the Korean church, but to suggest a new model of mission to revitalize the Korean church. Chapter 2 of this project deals with an over-all understanding of the church based on the Bible. Chapter 3 deals with the mission of the church, including a biblical understanding of mission today. Chapter 4 examines briefly Korean church history from the mission point of view through analyzing the important events of the Korean church and society. Chapter 5 examines several problems in the history of the Korean church. This includes important critiques of Korean mission. Chapter 6 presents a new model of mission in Korea for the twenty-first century. In order for the Korean church to establish a new vision for society and community, the church must overcome the present problems of mission in Korea.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Problem Addressed by This Project

This project deals with the problem of mission as practiced in the Korean church. Even though the Korean church has experienced great growth throughout its history, there are some down-sides to this growth. The problems addressed by this project are the effects of the concentration on materialism, the belief system of the church, a lack of morality, and a split among denominations within the Korean church.

Importance of the Problem

The Protestant church in Korea has experienced an enormous development over a period of 110 years. Even though the foreign missionaries who came in the early Christian period in Korea were very productive in evangelizing the Korean people, certain problems have resulted due to their methods.

There are some problems in the evangelical work of the Korean church due to its continuation of an extremely interpersonal approach to people. Korean churches have focused on quantity rather than on quality, and they have resorted to using aggressive methods to recruit converts such as special revival meetings on a large scale.

On the other hand, the history of the evangelical work of the Korean church has included the dimension of an attitude of superiority of Korean Christians toward other cultures and religions since there has been no effort toward the indigenization of the Korean church. Without sufficient consideration of an indigenous Korean mission strategy, the Korean church continues to try to assimilate the Western form of Christianity.

When Korean churches reached their upper limit in quantity, a decrease in membership began to appear. Even though approximately twenty-five percent of the South Korean population are Christians, Christianity has not had a great impact on the whole Korean society. Therefore change is necessary in the area of Korean missionary work. The evangelical perspective of preaching the Gospel, in the way early Christian missionaries did, is no longer attractive. The current mission of the Korean church does not have a productive impact on Korean society, nor has it contributed to any significant reforms.

In order for the Korean church to overcome the problems in the area of its mission, it is necessary to establish a new model for missionary work. A possible new model for the church could have people trying to meet the needs of Christian faith and community in a wholly Korean cultural context. In other words, the church must understand the interests and needs of the Korean people. These needs and interests are best satisfied through social work, Christian ethics and responsibility.

This study concentrates on how the Korean church can maintain its evangelical focus as conceived in the Gospel, and at the same time focus on the concrete concerns in the lives and social activities of the people in a Korean cultural context.

Thesis

The thesis of this project is that a new model of mission is necessary to revitalize the Korean church. This new model consists of a self-examination of the traditional evangelical work in Korea. This study will provide insight for the reconsideration of mission and ministry of the Korean church into the twenty-first century.

Definitions of Major Terms

Materialism in the Korean Church

Protestant church growth in Korea has been a remarkable aspect in the history of the church world-wide. As a result of the Korean mission period of 110 years, there are now more than ten million Christians throughout Korea. Even though the main reason for Korean church growth has been religious enthusiasm, modernization and economic growth in Korean society have brought about a rapid expansion of the church as well. Consequently, rapid church growth in Korea has given rise to materialism within the church. Due to materialism in the Korean church, most Christians have merely had an interest in growth. They have focused only on congregation numbers, leaning toward bigger churches rather than a consideration of deep faithful participation in the church.

The Great Commission

The phrase "the Great Commission" generally refers to the last command of Jesus Christ. Jesus said to his disciples before He ascended: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you;"¹ and, "You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."² The Great Commission is the real source of mission because we cannot understand the disciples' mission without an understanding of Jesus' mission.³

Missio Dei

Mission is God's work. George F. Vicedom, in his book The Mission of God, describes the concept of *Missio Dei* as follows: "The mission is work that belongs to God. This is the first

¹ Matt. 28:19-20

² Acts 1:8.

³ Mortimer Arias and Alan Johnson, The Great Commission (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 13.

implication of *missio Dei*. God is the Lord, the One who gives the orders, the Owner, the One who takes care of things.”⁴ The mission and the church as tools of God should carry out His mission realizing His missionary intention. Therefore, we call God’s mission as *Missio Dei* because mission is based on the activity of God.

"Missio Dei" is a Latin term meaning "the mission of God." Although the term has been used in the Catholic church since George F. Vicedom's book Missio Dei, it has received wide publicity in both the Protestant and the Catholic church. The concept of "Missio Dei" has developed to the extent that Christian mission emphasized not only mission through Jesus, but also establishing a dialogue with people of other faiths.

Mission and Evangelism

Mission belongs to God. It comes from the creative and redemptive activities of God for the world. Church has a mission because the church is invited in to participate in the gifts of this divine mission for the sake of God’s kingdom. The Lutheran church in America, in a group report “Consultation on Evangelism,” states the definition of mission as follows: “Mission is the whole action of the church toward the world. It includes evangelism, social ministries, and a prophetic critique of our contemporary setting.”⁵ Mission is all activities whose basic purpose is to disciple all the people of world. It must be concerned with the whole individual and the whole society.

⁴ George F. Vicedom, The Mission of God: An Introduction to a Theology of Mission trans. Gilbert A. Thiele and Dennis Hilgendorf (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 5.

⁵ Lutheran Church in America, Consultation on Evangelism: Group Reports, Division for World Mission and Ecumenism, [Jacksonville Beach, Fla., 1983] (New York: Division for World Mission and Ecumenism, 1984), 9.

Evangelism is the heart of the church's mission task. The Lutheran church in America, also, states the definition of evangelism as follows: "Evangelism is the specific activity of making Christ known by word and by deed, especially to those who do not know him, so that all people may have an opportunity to believe in him, to confess him as Lord and Savior, to become his disciples in the fellowship of the church, and to serve him in God's total mission in the world."⁶ As mission is the essence of the church, so evangelism is the core of mission. The church's whole mission in the world is inseparable from its specific evangelistic calling to announce the Lordship of Christ and the good news of the kingdom of God. Because "evangelism is more specific and limited than the mission of the church",⁷ I use the term of "mission" as the whole action of the church toward the world in this project.

Work Previously Done in the Field

Books, magazines, journals and newspapers which deal with the unique situations and problems of Korean mission in the future and new directions for Korean mission in the twenty-first century are richly available. The understanding of Korean mission has been reported and examined from various perspectives. Suh Young Na, in her project Jesus-centric Mission of the Korean Church in a Religiously Pluralistic Age introduces the essential aspects of her thought and Jesus-centric mission. She struggles with the mission method of the Korean church in a religiously pluralistic age. She concludes that "Jesus-centric mission will contribute to overcoming Christianity's identity crisis."⁸

⁶ Ibid., 4.

⁷ Ibid., 4.

⁸ Suh Young Na, Jesus-centric Mission of the Korean Church in a Religiously Pluralistic Age, D.Min. Project, School of Theology at Claremont, 1991 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1991), 4.

She believes that the Korean church should be a faithful missionary church which obeys the Great Commission, and should emphasize the Jesus-only faith of mission even in a pluralistic society.

Jin Choi, in his project Mission and the Twenty-first century Ministry of the Korean Church introduces the importance of the Word of God and a synthetic understanding of mission for the future of Korean mission. Pointing out the present phenomenon of Korean mission, he concludes that "the concept of mission should be taken out of the Bible, not from the theologian's idea."⁹ He stands on the conservative side of mission theology.

Man Ryul Lee in his book Hankook Kidokyosa Teukang discusses the problems of mammonism and materialism in the Korean church. He points out that the Korean church has disregarded social-justice and the duties of being a Christian. He suggests Christians in Korea have to have an awareness of history in order to solve their problems.¹⁰ He stands in the side of social salvation rather than individual salvation.

Mortimer Arias in his book Announcing the Reign of God deals with a holistic concept of evangelism utilizing the kingdom of God. Through the perspective of the reign of God, Arias develops his idea of the kingdom of God for contemporary evangelization. According to Arias, "the good news of the kingdom is also humanizing, calling human beings to claim their real dignity and heritage in God's secret design."¹¹ Arias states that the kingdom of God encompasses all human relationships with the neighbor, with nature, and with God.

⁹ Jin Choi, Mission and the Twenty-first Century Ministry of the Korean Church D. Min. Project, School of Theology at Claremont, 1992 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1993), 3.

¹⁰ Man Ryul Lee, Hankook Kidohyosa Teukang [A lecture of the history of the Korean church] (Seoul: Evangelical Student Fellowship, 1987), 132.

Lesslie Newbigin in his book The Gospel in a Pluralist Society discusses how the gospel is related to a pluralist society. Newbigin finds Christianity is in a society marked by religious pluralism, ethical diversity, and cultural relativism. According to Newbigin, "People of different religions can share much of a common culture."¹² Newbigin provides analysis of contemporary culture in the pluralist society and suggests how Christianity can have an attitude of mission in this context.

Scope and Limitations

My precise intent in this project is to not only identify the problems of mission in the Korean Church, but also to suggest a new mission model. Considering the concepts of society and community, I intend to critically assess the Korean mission and suggests methods for reestablishing mission in Korea.

This project, however, does not deal with the entire social, political, and economic situation but examines the phenomenon of other religions in Korea, and proposes a mission model for the twenty-first century in Korea.

Procedure for Integration

This project not only analyzes and examines the problems of mission in the history of the Korean church, but also suggests practical solutions for extending this mission into the future. Library research will be the primary source of information and data for this project. This project integrates Korean church history and Christian mission where appropriate to support its thesis. It also integrates

¹¹ Mortimer Arias, Announcing the Reign of God (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), xii.

¹² Leslie Newbigin, The Gospel in a Pluralist Society (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1994), 14.

all available resources, the experience of my own ministry, and some unique characteristics of the Korean cultural situation.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 covers the thesis of the project, the problem and its importance, along with a discussion of major terms, a review of work previously done in the field, the scope and limitation of the project, and the procedure for integration.

Chapter 2 deals with the over-all understanding of the church based on the Bible: "What is the church?". Correct understanding of the ecclesiology enables us to convey the kingdom of God through the powerful mission of the church today. In this chapter, I will deal with the essence and function of the church.

Chapter 3 deals with an over-all understanding of mission today: What is the mission of the Christian church? The purpose of this chapter is to examine possible answers to this question from the biblical understanding of mission and theology of contemporary mission today. I will make a brief historical survey of the theology of mission including the evangelical and ecumenical movement in Christian history.

Chapter 4 deals with a brief history of the Korean church from the missional point of view. In this chapter, I will present the important events of the Korean church and society, and point out the meaning and problems of Protestant mission in the history of the Korean church. Also, I will critically analyze the mission policy and strategy of the Korean church from its early foundation to the present.

Chapter 5 presents some mission problems of the Korean church at the present time. Despite the rapid growth in numbers in the Korean church, there needs to be a new reflection on mission toward the twenty-first century ministry of the Korean church. I will present some problems facing the

Korean church; concentration on growth and materialism in the Korean church and society, belief system of growth of the Korean church, a lack of morality, and the split among denominations. There will be important critiques of Korean mission. The most problematic factors are material superiority within the Korean church and the resulting elitist attitudes among Korean Christians.

Chapter 6 suggests a model of mission for the twenty-first century Korea. If the Korean church establishes a new vision for society and community, the church should be able to overcome the present problems of mission in Korea. In this chapter, I am going to introduce my theory that the Korean church can be a major contributor to solving the problems of church and society addressed by this project. All the while, realizing that the social potential of the Korean church is limited by the divisions created by both conservative and liberal views.

Chapter 7 summarizes, and briefly evaluates the major points presented in this project, and offers concluding remarks as well as my own reflections.

CHAPTER 2

Ecclesiology

. What is the Church?

What is the church? What does the church mean? The church does not mean any building or religious institute. The church is a gathering of people who believe in Jesus Christ. God loves the world and all humankind, and he sent Jesus Christ into the world in order to save them. Due to God's grace, there has come into existence a people who believe and accept Jesus Christ as Savior. In order to worship God, and to teach the truth, places are needed for worship and teaching, and institutions are needed for the management of the church. This gathering of people has served not only worship and education but also God's purpose. In this sense, the church is the gathering of people who are called to worship God, to teach the truth, and to serve God's intention through Jesus Christ.

Thomas F. Torrance states that the foundation of the church is as follows:

The church is grounded in the being and life of God, and rooted in the eternal purpose of the Father to send his Son, Jesus Christ, to be the Head and Saviour of all things. The Church does not exist by and for itself, and therefore cannot be known or interpreted out of itself. Both the source and the goal of the Church are in the eternal love of God which has overflowed in the creation and redemption of the world. God has not willed to live alone, but to create and seek others distinct from himself upon whom to pour out his Spirit, that he might share with them his divine life and glory, and as Father, Son and Holy Spirit dwell in their midst forever. God will not be without his Church; the Church is nothing without God. But in God the Church exists as the supreme object of divine grace, and in the Church God is pleased to live his divine life and manifest his divine glory. That is the mystery and destiny of the Church, hidden from the foundation of the world, but revealed and fulfilled in the Incarnation of the Son of God and in His glorious work of redemption, for in Jesus Christ the Church as the redeemed people of God is the

crown of creation living in praise and gratitude to the Creator and reflecting with all things, visible and invisible, the glory of the eternal God.¹

The purpose of the church is to complete God's divine glory for the redemption of the world. In order to save the people of the world, God works with eternal love through the church. Therefore, the church exists for God's divine purpose.

Even though salvation begins with the individual human, Christianity is also social in its concept and content.² Edward D. Morris states that Christianity exists for humanity as well as for the individual human, as follows:

In this comprehensive social work, the chief agent or instrument employed is the Church, -a divine organism set up among men for the purpose of affecting humanity savingly through the Gospel, and endowed with all the capabilities requisite to this high function. Regarded as an organism, the Church receives and enjoys the same gracious influences with produce and develop the Christian life in the individual soul. It is established by Christ, founded on His Word, sustained by His Spirit, quickened through grace, and divinely commissioned for its special work. Regarded as an instrumentality, the Church is vested with divine efficiency adequate to this peculiar mission: the power of Christianity to penetrate and restore human society is specially embodied in it. . . . Hence Ecclesiology, which may be defined as the doctrine of Scripture respecting the Church, in the broadest sense of this phrase, is an essential and conspicuous division of Christian Theology.³

A special work of the church is to affect humanity, and to develop human life for salvation. The church exists for not only individual souls, but also for the whole of human society because God called the church as an organism in order to serve the world with God's divine love.

¹ Thomas F. Torrance, "Foundation of the Church", Theological Foundations for Ministry, ed. Ray S. Anderson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1979), 199.

² Edward D. Morris, Ecclesiology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1898), 5.

³ Ibid., 6-7.

The church is the spiritual family of God, the Christian fellowship created by the Holy Spirit through the testimony to the mighty acts of God in Christ Jesus. The essential meaning of church must center on a group of people whose assembly is based upon their mutual relationship with God. These imply that the church is essentially spiritual and has a spiritual nature because the community of the church is related to a group of people with God.

At the same time, the church is characterized by its activity to accomplish the prophetic purpose of the Scriptures. John P. Newport suggests that in a broad sense, “the church can be defined as the whole body of those who through Christ’s death have been savingly reconciled to God and have received new life.”⁴ Newport believes that the purpose of the church is to explicate the images of the church found in the New Testament, such as the people of God, the new creation, the fellowship in faith, and the body of Christ. He explains that “the purpose of the church is to express Christ’s lordship in the life of the church.”⁵ He points out that the purpose of the church is to encourage worship, to serve those who are in physical need, to provide fellowship in the Christian community, to make disciples, to educate people, and to develop an appropriate organizational and leadership balance.⁶

According to Leonardo Boff, church communities are helping the whole church by restoring to the people of God, the faithful, the rights of which they have been deprived in the

⁴ John P. Newport, The People of God, ed. Paul Basden (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1991), 19.

⁵ Ibid., 23.

⁶ Ibid., 23-32.

linear structure.⁷ Boff rethinks the church in the light of experience of the presence and power of the resurrected Christ in the basic community. Boff tries to proclaim the good news of salvation for the dynamic new church emerging among the poor. In order to understand what the church is, it is necessary that we start from the point of understanding the nature of the church.

Definition of the Term “Church”

The term church is derived from the Greek word, *ekklesia*. It stresses a house in which the Lord especially dwelt. The term *ekklesia* applied in classic Greek to any assembly of persons called out, or called together, for any specific purpose. The term, *ekklesia* as applied in the New Testament means the assembly of people who participate in the Holy Communion by accepting Jesus’ Gospel and participating in public worship. In New Testament times, it meant “assembly,” “congregation” or “community.” It is the idea of “community” that is expressed by Jesus and the writers of the New Testament. As Robert Banks writes, “Its chief importance lies in the way it stresses the centrality of meeting for community life: it is through gathering that the community comes into being and is continually recreated.”⁸

When Jesus told his disciples that he was going to build his “community,” he was building on an Old Testament concept with which they were familiar. The Hebrew word for community or assembly in the Old Testament is *qahal*. This may be the word that Jesus used in his conversation

⁷ Leonardo Boff, Ecclesiogenesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1992), 32.

⁸ Robert Banks, Paul’s Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in Their Historical Setting (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1980), 51.

with Peter and the others since they spoke Aramaic. It is an important word in the life of Israel in the Old Testament.

In Genesis *qahal* is used in the promise to Jacob. God promised to make Jacob into a “community of nations” (Gen. 35:11; 48:4). When the Israelites came out of Egypt they were referred to as the “Israelite community” or the “whole community of Israel” (Lev. 4:13, 21; 16:17, 33; Num. 14:5; 16:3, 33; 20:6; Duet. 5:22; 31:30). This was a community made up of people in a covenant relationship with God. The community was distinguished from aliens (Num. 15:15) and to become “unclean” before God was to be cut off from the community (Num. 19:20). When the Israelites broke the covenant with God, they were destroyed as a community as the prophets had foretold (Mic. 2: 1-5). When they repented and God returned them from exile, they once again became a community (Ezra 10:8, 10; Neh. 8:2; 13:1).

The Church as the People of God

The church as the people of God implies the thought that the church is God’s possession, the community of people who are God’s people, and God’s purpose is included in the church. The church is not a organization built by a human plan, but by God. God called Abraham as His people (Gen. 12:1-3). By following God’s word, Abraham and his descendants, Israel, became the chosen people of God. God, today, calls His people through Jesus Christ. Therefore, the church is the called people of God through Jesus Christ.

We became members of the Kingdom of God through faith in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8, 9). People within the Kingdom have been restored to the image of God through Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 3:16, 17; 4:24; Col. 1:15; 3:10; and Rom. 7:22). As God’s people, we can now in the strength of Jesus Christ (Phil. 4:13) overcome the temptations to sin (1 Cor. 4:13). As people of

God, we will pick up our crosses and follow Jesus (Matt. 16:24) and crucify each of our own sinful natures (Gal. 5:24). In so doing, we will live by the Spirit (Gal. 5:25 and John 3:5, 8) and Christ will dwell in our hearts through faith (Eph. 3:17).

The Scripture offers five characteristics of the people of God within the church of Christ. First, the Church is a chosen people. It was through God's gracious will and love that He chose us to be His redeemed people (1 Cor. 1:1, 2; Rom. 1:7; and 1 Pet. 1:1).

Second, the Church is a pilgrim people who are strangers and aliens in this world (Heb. 11:9). Abraham and Sarah confessed that "they were strangers and aliens on earth" (Heb. 11:13) and were "looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Heb. 10:10). They saw the promised land at a distance although they never possessed the land themselves.

In faith, God has called us out of this world to live before Him, but then places us back into the world (John 17:15) to continue to live in it. Christians become His instruments in proclaiming His Gospel of salvation.

Third, the Church is a covenant people. "The blood of the eternal covenant" (Heb. 13:20) is that of Jesus Christ our Lord and consists of four parts as predicted by Jeremiah, in Jer. 31:31-34: God is our God; we are His people; He forgives us for our sins; and He will not remember those sins anymore. The Lord made a covenant with His people and had to die because of it (Heb. 9:16), since "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb. 9:22).

Therefore, as people redeemed by God in the forgiveness of sins through Jesus' blood (Eph. 1:7), we have received the blood of Christ through faith. The blood is the "eternal covenant" (Heb. 13:20) and, because we have received His blood, we are His covenant people.

We can better understand why Jesus calls His children to pick up their crosses and follow Him.

We are taken right to the Cross of suffering and death itself and it is in baptism that we die with Him. The Church is called to die along with Christ and to crucify its flesh (Matt. 16:24; Gal. 5:25). The people who do not pick up their crosses in faith and follow Jesus are not worthy of Him (Matt. 10:28) and cannot be His covenant people (Mark 16:16).

Fourth, the Church is a witnessing people. In the Great Commission in Matt. 28:18-20, the Lord Jesus gives the task of the Church to His disciples: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations. . . ." It is not surprising then that Paul speaks of the Church receiving the ministry of reconciliation from the Lord (2 Cor. 5:18; Eph. 3:10; and Col. 1:20). The primary task of the Church is to share the Gospel of forgiveness so that others will receive it in faith.

Finally, the Church is a holy people, washed clean by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:25, 26). The people of God are called to be holy just as God Himself is holy (Matt. 5:48). As holy people, we share in the divine nature of God (2 Pet. 1:4), as a body connected to its rightful Head (Eph. 1:23).⁹

The church is a pilgriming people who live in the center of history. A person of God should go forward to the kingdom of God, not disregard situations in the world. Even though the people of God suffer some pain of life and of the Cross, they should go forward to the kingdom of God. This means that the people of God should have an attitude of future-centered life as a

⁹ Howard Snyder, The Problem of Wineskins (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975), 103.

pilgriming people for the coming Kingdom of God. The life of the people of God is not frustrated in the painful situation of the world, but they put God's principles into practice.

The people of God should have an opened-attitude in their lives. Christ is calling the people of God to renew history in this world. Therefore, the people of God should respond to Jesus Christ and live in a modest way.

The Church as the Body of Christ

The phrase "body of Christ" cannot be found in the four Gospels or Acts. However, Paul stated several times that the church is the body of Christ. This means that the church is different from a human meeting or organization. It is important to understand the church in the New Testament.

Jesus himself was sent from God with a special mission. He said for people to follow Him. We call the church the body of Christ because new people who follow Jesus Christ have a special relationship with Jesus. According to David Watson, the Scripture uses the phrase, "body of Christ" in a number of ways.

Initially, it can be used to describe the sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross as is done in Rom. 7:4 and in Heb. 10:10.

Secondly, it is used in the Bible to describe the sacramental eating of the Lord's Body in the celebration of Holy Communion. This is demonstrated in 1 Cor. 10:16 as follows: "Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?"

Thirdly, the phrase, "body of Christ" is used to describe all the believers in Christ as they are unified by the very blood that He shed on the cross. This is indicated in Eph. 1:22, 23: "And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."¹⁰

¹⁰ David Watson, I Believe in the Church (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1978), 96.

As the human body is an organic unity with all parts contributing to the operation of the whole, so is the body of Christ. The body of Christ is alive and dynamic, it exists for the common good of the church (1 Cor. 12:7) and for the proclamation of the Gospel (1 Pet. 1:9). Being in the body of Christ means more than its members belonging to Christ and to each other. It means to have Christ live with each member (John 14:23) and that He gives each member eternal life (John 11:25, 26; 5:21).

God established the church through his Son, Jesus Christ. God incorporates Christians into the church by his Holy Spirit. God, by the Holy Spirit, unifies the community in one body that works together. God gives each Christian special gifts that enable them to carry on the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Howard Snyder writes that

being a community and a people is a gift from God through the work of Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is not produced by human techniques or plans. The church is constituted the people of God by the action of Jesus Christ, and this reality opens the door to the possibility of true and deep community.¹¹

This true and deep community is expressed in the New Testament image of "the body of Christ." This is an important New Testament image and is at the heart of Paul's discussion in Ephesians. "In Christ" one becomes a part of the church which is "his body." The church is the reality where his fullness appears. We meet Christ in the fellowship of his body. It is, therefore, important to understand the church as the "body of Christ."

¹¹ Howard S. Snyder, The Community of the King (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1977), 58.

The image of the church as the body of Christ is found in Ephesians 1:23, 4:1-16 and 5:23,

28. The idea that the Jews and Gentiles have come together in one body (2:16) is also expressed.

As Paul discusses God's eternal purpose in Jesus Christ, he states that it is through the church that God accomplishes his purpose (1:22, 23). Paul refers to God's gift of Christ as head of the church, which he then refers to as "his body." In his body, all things find their fullness. This indicates that Christ is exalted by God with a practical purpose, for the good of the church and all creation.

Paul's image of the church as the "body of Christ" conveys an important truth. The community or church of Christ is an organism, not an organization. An organization is a lifeless structure that is artificially put together. An organism is alive. A body grows, changes, functions and carries out the purposes determined by the head. It does have organization. All of the parts are designed and put together by the Creator so that it can function in perfect harmony.

Our understanding of church must not be a place where people who are called Christians meet together in a social gathering and perform certain rituals of worship. It is not doing things a certain way or agreeing with a set of doctrinal positions. It should be that we are the "community of Christ" when we come together in unity and in love as the body of Christ

The Church as the House of the Holy Spirit

The church is the people of God and the body of Christ. At the same time, the church is the community of the Holy Spirit, as the house of Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who brought the church into being. Even though the church was established by an event of history, the vitality of the church now comes from the continuous dwelling of the Holy Spirit. The dramatic event of the Holy Spirit occurred at Pentecost. At that time, many people were baptized and three

thousand were converted through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit continued to be with the church. As the Bible says: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-Jews or Greeks, slaves or free-and all were made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13). The church is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. To be a member of the church is to share with the gift of the Holy Spirit, and to dwell in the community by the power of the Holy Spirit. Dwelling within the church, the Holy Spirit conveys his life and power to the church. In Acts 1:8 Jesus said “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.” Peter’s sermon at Pentecost does not come from his skillful delivery, but lies in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, being one, makes a unity within the body. This does not mean uniformity, but a oneness in the essence of the Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit, the early church had a strong consciousness of membership. They shared their possessions with a sense of “one in heart and mind” (Acts. 4:32). The Holy Spirit, dwelling within the church, is the means of Jesus’ presence with us. Jesus has promised to continue to abide with his disciples (Matt. 28: 20; John 14:18, 23). Yet Jesus said as well that he had to go away so that the Holy Spirit could come (John 16:7). The Holy Spirit also makes the church holy and pure. All followers are sanctified under Jesus’ new covenant because they are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

The church is in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jurgen Moltmann states that “the church is preserved in its identity and continuity by Christ’s faithfulness to his promises and through the presence of the Holy Spirit.”¹² Through this power of the Holy Spirit, God creates and renews

¹² Jurgen Moltmann, Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution of Messianic Ecclesiology (London: SCM Press, 1977), 313.

the church continuously. Also the church is the house of the Holy Spirit which completes God's promise. Karl Barth talks about the church as the house of the Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit is the awakening power in which Jesus Christ has formed and continually renews His body, . . . His own earthly-historical form of existence, the one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. . . . In everything that we have to say concerning the Christian community and Christian faith we can move only within the circle that they are founded by the Holy Spirit and therefore that they must be continually refounded by him, but that the necessary refounding by the Holy Spirit can consist only in a renewal of the founding which He has already accomplished.¹³

The church has its being in a new and continuous creative work of God. Through the Holy Spirit, Christ is the Lord of the church, and the risen Christ works in the individual and the community. The power of the resurrection of Christ is more than ecstasy or miracle. The Holy Spirit is a power which can create the faith of people, and is to guide the norm of followers' lives. The Holy Spirit makes the whole biological, cultural and religious life history of a person charismatically alive.

The Church as Fellowship of the Christian Community

One of the main concerns of Christianity is the relationship between God and human, and between humans. This relationship is very important to understanding the church today. This relationship is the relationship of friendship, fellowship and sharing. This relationship, as a personal relationship between God and human, is to transfer and to respond to love.

In Acts 2:44-45, the early Christians served the neighbor in need within the Christian community. They showed a progressive act of physical support, a sharing of property and

¹³ Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, eds. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, vol. 4/3 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1961), 643-47.

possessions. We find the early church sharing in common life and meals. This was more than the ministry of material sharing. The church demonstrated the meaning of *agape* in its internal life, and indicated the model for the quality of life in the kingdom of God to come. The Church needs real fellowship based on Christian love.

Paul speaks of sharing people's experiences with others: "If one member is honored, all rejoice together" (1 Cor. 12:26). It means that the reality of the fellowship of love in the one body, in suffering together and rejoicing together. This is related to the love of Christ (Eph. 3:17), to the relatedness of participation in the Spirit (Phil. 2:1), and to the love for the poor who have been chosen by God (James 2:5). While hurt is reduced, joy is increased by being shared. We are to encourage and sympathize with each other (Gal. 6:2). In the full light of fellowship, loving the brothers stresses not only those of a similar mind, but also the enemy, the cursing opponent (Rom. 12:10). In Phil. 2, in the light of Christ's self-emptying, His endless service, concern, and mercy radiates in the fellowship. True fellowship is not secondary but a foremost understanding of the gospel.

Avery Dulles states that "The church aims to lead men into communion with the divine. But that goal is not simply the reward of a life well lived. Wherever the Church is present, men are already united with God."¹⁴ The church should expand the realms of fellowship of the people into the society. Through the communion of Christian community, the church should overcome the problem of individualism of the churches and denominations, regionalism, exclusive and selfish attitude of the faith. All people should be one in the communion of Jesus Christ. There is always

¹⁴ Avery Dulles, Models of the Church, rev. ed. (New York: Doubleday, Image Books, 1987), 58.

the danger of a closed community of the church when fellowship of the church is isolated from witness and service in the world. However, fellowship is crucial for the church. According to the Bible, community and fellowship mean shared life together based in our new being in Jesus Christ.

Summary

The church is not a building or religious institute, but a gathering of people who believe in Jesus Christ. The church is a gathering of people who are called to worship God, to teach the truth, and to serve God's intention through Jesus Christ. The church is the people of God as a chosen, pilgrim, covenant, witnessing, and holy people who live in the center of the history of the world. Christ is calling the people of God to renew history in this world.

The church is the body of Christ. In Christ's body, all things find their fullness. Christ is exalted by God with a practical purpose, for the good of the church and all creation. We are the community of Christ when we come together in unity and in love as the body of Christ. Also, the church is the community of the Holy Spirit, as the house of the Holy Spirit. The church is dwelt in by the Holy Spirit. To be a member of the church is to share with the gift of the Holy Spirit, and to dwell in the community by the power of the Holy Spirit.

One of the main concerns of the church is the relationship between God and human, and between humans. The church is fellowship of the Christian community. The church needs real fellowship based on Christian love as a model for realizing the kingdom of God to come.

CHAPTER 3

Understanding of Mission

Mission is the core of Christianity. Mission begins with the nature and purpose of God. God is the Creator. God is love. God forgives and saves us from sin. God makes things whole. This is God's nature and mission. Mission is for a fallen creation through God's love, care, and redemption.

If the Bible is the foundation and source of the Christian church, so it is also with mission. We will find that the starting point of mission is God in the Scripture. God's purpose and plan is presented in the Bible. First, God is love and loves the world (John 3:16-17). God's love is the core of Bible. Second, God created the world and humankind (Genesis 2:2; John 1:4). God's action in creating the world and human beings was in itself an expression of love. Third, God has a plan for humankind. Because sin came into the human race, God has taken initiatives for the activity of salvation. God expressed divine love for the world finally and perfectly by coming personally, through Jesus, to redeem the world. Therefore God's heart is a missionary heart.

Here, it is obvious that mission is from God. It is God who works in and through Israel for the salvation of the nations. Christian mission is the work of God. However, God chooses men and women for the service of his mission. Even though God acts, his people are also obligated to act.

Biblical Basis of Mission

The Old Testament and the Kingdom of God

The Old Testament is important for understanding Christian mission. The Old Testament unfolds God's plan, which is fully revealed in Christ. Even though both the Old and New Testament provide us with the missionary messages, it is sometimes said that the Old Testament does not appear to be concerned with mission. Ferdinand Hahn states that the Old Testament lacks the idea of Israel having a mission to the nations.¹ He believed that the Old Testament appears to offer little basis for the idea of missions.² However, if we investigate the Old Testament more thoroughly, it becomes clear that it is concerned with mission. As Johannes Blauw has stated, a theology of mission should be based not only on the narrow road strip of a few special "missionary texts," but on the whole witness of both the Old Testament and the New Testament.³

The Christian mission which begins in the New Testament has its roots in the Old Testament. God is involved with man from the very beginning of history. Through the Old Testament, it is obvious that mission is God's essential concern. In the Old Testament God discloses Himself and establishes the world. He watches over His creatures for His good pleasure. He guides His people with His forgiving love. Without the Old Testament's contribution to our understanding of the eternal purpose of God for people, the revelation of the love of God in Christ in the New Testament cannot be fully grasped.

¹ Ferdinand Hahn, Mission in the New Testament, trans. Frank Clarke (London: SCM Press, 1965), 13.

² Ibid., 14.

³ Johannes Blauw, The Missionary Nature of the Church (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1974), 16, 17.

The Israelites became God's people through the covenant that was made between God and Abraham. God's purpose is to establish the people of Israel as genuine people of God. Aylward Shorter states, "However, this covenant did not really set Israel above other people, or even wholly apart from other peoples. Israel was not to dominate others with a human or material power."⁴ He sees the Old Testament as stressing the identity and integrity of God's people. However, God did not confine his activity of salvation to the people of Israel alone. Shorter states "after the exile they realized more clearly than before that Israel's destiny was not that of a politically powerful or materially wealthy nation which could rival other nations. They also realized that they had a mission to the whole world, that their religion was a universal one."⁵ This universalism is based on the Old Testament expressed "in the psalms, the book of Jonah and in the prophecies of Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, Micah and Malachi."⁶ God's universal, redemptive covenant has continuously been evolving. The non-Israelites could share in the salvation of God with Israelites through the obedience of faith to God. Even though Israel was bound to Yahweh by a covenantal bond, the non-Israelite met in Israel the demand of obedience to the God who is redemptive grace.

The message of hope in the Prophetic Books was associated with the restoration of Israel and the remnants. Especially the book of Isaiah is considered as the foremost book of the Old Testament in its urgent message of hope and salvation to the whole world. The prophetic

⁴ Aylward Shorter, Theology of Mission (Norte Dame: Fides Publishers, 1972), 26.

⁵ Ibid., 27.

⁶ Ibid., 27.

message of mission pointed to the eschatological Kingdom in which the new heaven and the new earth would be created in the future. This future Kingdom can come into fulfilment in connection with the figure of the Messiah who shall come. This Messianic expectation implies universality of salvation because the salvation is not confined to only Israel or the Remnants. The judgements of God on the day of the Lord shall affect all the nations of the earth (Zeph. 1:2-3), so shall all revere the Lord (Zeph. 2.11), and all shall know of His saving power.

God's kingship in the Old Testament is closely related to the lordship of Christ in the New Testament. The Old Testament represents God's universal kingship and His kingly rule over His people. Arthur Glasser points out five major perspectives of the Old Testament on the kingdom as follows:

1. God is sovereign in His kingship.
2. God's sovereign rule demands personal commitment.
3. God's subjects must constitute a "servant" community.
4. God's sovereign rule is relentlessly resisted and opposed by His people, by the peoples that do not know Him, and by the unseen powers.
5. God's sovereign rule is always directed toward the future.⁷

Through this kingship, God tries to complete the goal of the "Missio Dei." Roger Hedlund states that "the Missio Dei concept has much in common with the kingdom of God motif."⁸ The idea of kingdom is identified with the broad scope of God's concern as well as the social dimension.⁹ Even though the mission of God in the Old Testament works through Israel,

⁷ Auther F. Glasser, Contemporary Theologies of Mission (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 34-35.

⁸ Roger E. Hedlund, The Mission of the Church in the World (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 74.

⁹ Ibid., 74.

the focus of God's concern is the people of the world. The Old Testament gives a clear command to the people of God to go on missions. The people of Israel in the Old Testament saw themselves as being at the center of God's intentions for the world. They expected that other nations would join them in the worship of God as they themselves were faithful to the covenant.

Old Testament history and legislation provide numerous examples of God's interest in non-Israelite peoples. We can find God's love and concern for all people. The Old Testament provides God's social concern as well as religious life of the people of Israel. For example, God does not neglect the issue of poverty (Deut. 15:11), the issue of justice (Deut. 16:18; 2 Chron. 19:5-7), the issue of ecology (Deut. 22:6; Gen 2:15), and the issue of equality (Lev. 25; Exod. 21:2). According to Roger Hedlund, God's concern for poverty and justice extends to the foreigners.¹⁰ The basis for this social concern is Israel's own redemption. Israel has received much from God and is responsible to give much to her brother, Non-Israelites.

Mission in the New Testament:

Hedlund regards Jesus as the missionary Christ.¹¹ He states, "He is the Messiah of Israel and the Savior of the world. In Jesus, God disclosed himself."¹² While the activity of God in the Old Testament revealed his missionary nature in and through Israel, God in the New Testament acts in and through Jesus Christ. To understand mission in the New Testament, we must understand Jesus Christ.

¹⁰ Ibid., 79.

¹¹ Ibid., 158.

¹² Ibid., 158-89.

Jesus Christ is the essential heart of the Christian Good News. After admitting Jesus Christ is our Savior and Lord, we, as Christians, confess mission is the command of Jesus Christ. It begins with the good news of Jesus. As the Bible says, the "Great Commission" that evangelizes the people of the world is the task of the whole church and of every Christian. Moltimer Arias and Alan Johnson point out that the "Great Commission" is "the real source and origin of mission: Jesus' own mission."¹³ Arias and Johnson states:

We cannot understand the disciples' mission without Jesus' mission. Paul's mission and the writings coming from it dominate in the New Testament, and they are the oldest written documents of Christianity, but Paul's mission has no meaning without Jesus' mission.¹⁴

Therefore, the four different versions of the last commission (Matt. 28:16-20; Mark 16:14-20; Luke 24:44-47; and John 20:21) are the core of Jesus' mission. In order to understand mission, we should examine Jesus' ministry.

Jesus helped the demon-possessed and healed the sick. His mission dealt with the physical part of people, as well as ministering faithfully through his authority and power. Jesus' preaching refers to evangelism, communicating the Good News of the Kingdom of God so that people might believe. Jesus also taught in order that people might understand this good news. He not only preached, taught and healed, but also defended the weak, counseled others and helped all those who were in need, out of his great love and compassion for people. He was indeed the Christ who had come to do the will of the Father.

¹³ Arias and Johnson, 13.

¹⁴ Ibid., 13.

Jesus' ministry is concentrated on the last commission which has been the most powerful motivational text for Christian mission. According to Arias, however, there are four different points of the Great Commission with different emphases in their four different contexts.¹⁵

The most obvious characteristic of the Matthean version of the last commission is discipleship.¹⁶ The center of the last commission is "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them . . . teaching them." This Matthean version of the last commission means Jesus' proclamation and teaching about a universal Kingdom without any exclusions.

The most obvious feature of the Markan version of the last commission is epitomized as follows: "Go into the whole world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (16:15). Also, the proclamation of the Kingdom of God is well presented in the Gospel of Mark: "Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news" (1:14,15). According to Arias and Johnson, especially, the Marcan version emphasizes the Holistic Proclamation of the Kingdom of God:

Yet to proclaim the Reign of God was much more than verbal proclamation. The kingdom is multi-dimensional and holistic, and it has to be announced holistically- through preaching, teaching, healing, exorcising, calling and forming disciples, feeding, comforting, and confronting. It is proclamation in action. Actually, in Mark deeds have precedence over words.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ibid., 16.

¹⁶ Ibid., 18.

¹⁷ Ibid., 39.

The Markan paradigm for mission is more practical than Matthean theology. In Mark, the Great Commission for the Kingdom of God is holistic mission with action. We can find clear examples of the holistic proclamation of the Gospel in Mark as follows: Jesus gave the crowds spiritual food (6:34), but he felt compassion for people's material needs (8:2-3).

The Lucan paradigm for mission is a Jubilee proclamation. We can find Jesus' Jubilee proclamation in his inaugural message:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4: 18-19)

Arias regards Jesus' Jubilee mission as Good News to the poor, restoration of life, healing, forgiveness of sins, rectification, and salvation.¹⁸ In Luke, the Great Commission emphasizes the holistic proclamation of the Jubilee in the light of the Kingdom of God.

The Great mission in the Gospel John is different from the other three versions because the emphasis of the Fourth gospel is incarnational rather than verbal.¹⁹ The Bible depicts the last commission in John: "It was late that Sunday evening, and the disciples were gathered together behind locked doors. . . . Then Jesus came and stood among them. . . . The disciples were filled with joy at seeing the Lord" (20:19-20). Even though the doors were closed, that Jesus came and stood among them was the eternal presence of the divine Christ. Arias and Johnson state "Incarnational christology is at the center of Christian mission."²⁰ The main sentence of the last

¹⁸ Ibid., 67-72.

¹⁹ Ibid., 79.

²⁰ Ibid., 81.

commission in John is "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (20:21). Therefore, for Arias and Johnson, mission in John is to be sent into the world with no specific action or task.²¹

Jesus' whole message and ministry is based on the kingdom of God. When Jesus announced the gospel of the kingdom, Jesus Christ gave His people a worldwide mission. The Good News of the Kingdom is to be preached throughout the whole world. Therefore, the kingdom of God is the central theme of the Bible.

Mortimer Arias describes "the good news of the kingdom" as "announcing the reign of God".²² He explains that "evangelization should be genuinely biblical, evangelical, holistic, humanizing, conscientizing, liberating, contextual, engaged, incarnational, and conflictive."²³ When Arias studied the issues of mission and evangelism for the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches in 1979, he pointed out several findings about "Kingdom Evangelization."²⁴

First finding: The gospel in the Gospels- Jesus' good news- is none other than "the good news of the kingdom." And Jesus himself was the first evangelist of the kingdom.

Second finding: The kingdom-of-God theme has practically disappeared from evangelistic and has been ignored by traditional "evangelism." The evangelistic message has been centered in personal salvation, individual conversion, and incorporation into the church.

Third finding: The kingdom of God, announced by Jesus, is multidimensional and all-encompassing. It is both a present and a future reality. It has to do with each individual creature and with the whole of society. It was addressed initially to "the lost

²¹ Ibid., 81.

²² Arias, xiv-xv.

²³ Ibid., xiii.

²⁴ Ibid., xiv.

sheep of the house of Israel," but was destined for "the whole world" and to "the end of the earth."²⁵

It embraces all dimensions of human life: physical, spiritual, personal and interpersonal, communal and social, historical and eternal. And it encompasses all human relationships-with the neighbor, with nature, and with God. It implies a total offer and a total demand.²⁶

With these holistic views, Arias presents evangelism itself as announcing the reign of God.

There needs to be a wholeness in our mission approach that enables us to complete the reign of God who brought the totality of human nature. Churches or Christians are aware of the kingdom of God as the horizon of the fulfillment of all things in Jesus Christ.

In most of Paul's epistles, Paul affirms his sense of divine calling. He was strongly convinced that he was called by God as an apostle through Jesus Christ. This made him devoted to the Great Commission. "Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God" (1 Cor. 1:1). He was specially called to be a missionary to the Gentiles.

Paul's apostolic ministry was directed toward the Gentiles (Gal. 2: 7, 9). From the time of his conversion, Paul was called to minister to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; 26:16-18). Paul worked in the sphere of Hellenistic Jewish Christianity especially in the Antioch church. Paul's extensive ministry at Ephesus (Acts 19), as well as his plan to visit Rome (Acts 19:21; Rom. 15:24, 28), is from his vision of mission. The aim of Paul's missionary works is to announce the salvation he

²⁵ Ibid., xv.

²⁶ Ibid., xv.

proclaimed through the event of Cross of Jesus Christ. His missionary motivation came from the urgent conviction that he must preach this good news to people.

Paul reminds us of the great distance between the Jews and the Gentiles:

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (that done in the body by the hands of men)-remember that at the time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. (Eph. 2:11-13)

Paul tells us there was a breaking down of barriers between the Jews and the Gentiles through the event of Cross of Jesus Christ. As a result, Paul preached peace on the earth through this reconciliation. Paul has confidence that God has reconciled all things through Christ. People had made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him (Col. 1:20-22). When we review carefully the teaching of the Bible on reconciliation, we can find first the affirmation of reconciliation with God and after that reconciliation between men. The task of proclaiming the reconciliation is the church’s main purpose until God brings His kingdom in all its fullness.

The Kingdom of God brought a most powerful impact for mission to Paul. He took over the idea of the Kingdom of God which Jesus taught in the four Gospels, and he developed it. For him, the Kingdom of God is the inner state of heart of consisting the righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. This experience is made possible by accepting the gospel of the cross. For Paul, the Kingdom of God is the Lordship of Jesus over the Church and is summarized as follows: “Jesus Christ is Lord. . . . Lord of the community and therefore of the world.”²⁷

²⁷ Blauw, 105

Paul's vision was universal. Paul intended to carry out a similar plan of action in the western part of the Empire, apparently from Rome, extending at least as far as Spain (Rom. 15:20-24, 28). Johannes Munck points out that Paul's missionary work among the Gentiles is indirectly missionary work among the Jew.²⁸ Paul was a Jew and felt an obligation toward his own people, as well as for those peoples still in darkness without the knowledge of the true God. Theologically, Paul recognized the Gentiles as heirs of the promise of God (Eph. 2:11; 3:21). This did not exclude the Jews. Initially Paul's ministry was directed toward the synagogue community, then increasingly toward the Gentiles (Acts 13:5, 14, 44-49). Paul's primary concern was not of the individual nor eternal salvation but the rejection of the Jews as a people. Paul, therefore, was dealing with nations and with admission to the church, the true Israel.²⁹

Current Situations of Our Society and Church

It has become a commonplace to say that we live in a pluralistic society represented by the variety of cultures, religions, and life-styles. Lesslie Newbigin explains the roots of pluralism:

Religion is from one point of view an aspect of culture, but this is not the whole of religion. Religions may be multi-cultural, as Christianity obviously is. And people of different religions can share much of a common culture. Cultural pluralism I take to be the attitude which welcomes the variety of different cultures and life-styles within one society and believes that this is an enrichment of human life. . . . Religious pluralism, on the other hand, is the belief that the differences between the religions are not a matter of truth and falsehood, but of different perceptions of the one truth.³⁰

²⁸ Johannes Munck, Paul and the Salvation of Mankind, trans. Frank Clarke (London: SCM, Press, 1959), 43.

²⁹ William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1964), 341.

³⁰ Newbigin, Gospel in a Pluralist Society, 14.

It is obvious that the gospel closely relates to a pluralist society. Christianity is in a society marked by religious pluralism, ethnic diversity, and cultural relativism.

Currently, on the other hand, there is economic oppression of every sort with massive foreign debt destroying the fabric of hope and life across much of the earth. There is the impending threat of global annihilation in an instant of nuclear catastrophe, or in expanding ecological suicide. Lester Brown says that "nature's limits are beginning to impose themselves on the human agenda, initially at the local level, but also at the global level."³¹ Brown also points out that "today's prices ignore the full costs of denuded forests, eroded hillsides, and dammed or polluted rivers."³² There is massive human pain caused by war, torture, hunger, the uprooting of peoples, the ruthlessness of greed, the insensitivity of pride. This is the state of our world.

Now people in the world still seek for the idols of success and prosperity, of dreams of peace without justice, of achievement without love, of satisfaction without self-giving. We, also, know that human power has limits, that technology will not save us.

Even though Christians want to pray to be one, there seems endless division in a Christian community. Because many churches try to live with their own way, their mission is an option when convenient. Evangelization of the church seems to like a prescription for success, forgetting the cross. Some just talk about institutional church growth as if it were biblical. I think this is our problem of the church. The church has often stressed numerical growth rather than spiritual

³¹ Lester R. Brown, State of the World, 1995 (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995), 5.

³² Ibid., 54.

depth. The church has often confused proclamation with words alone, forgetting the internal meaning of worship and Jesus' ministry.

Mission of the Church

Approaching the Bible as a whole on mission, I summarize on the understanding of mission. Mission is based on a command of Jesus. The Great Commission, especially as found in Matthew 28:19-20, has often read as a command to mission. Mission is an essential aspect of the church. Everything that the church means and does today is to be expressed in the framework of God's mission. The mission of Christians and of the Christian church is founded in God's mission, the Trinitarian action of God the Creator in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. Here, it is important how do we understand the meaning of the call to the church. Newbigin, in his book Foolishness to the Greek says:

The Gospel is not a set of beliefs that arise, or could arise, from empirical observation of the whole human experience. It is the announcement of a name and a fact that offer the starting point for a new and lifelong enterprise of understanding and coping with experience. . . . The church needs to be very humble in acknowledging that it is itself only a learner, and it needs to pay heed to all the variety of human experience in order to learn in practice what it means that Jesus is the King and Head of the human race.³³

Therefore, we must repent individually and collectively for our sin of rejection and stubborn disobedience. We must accept Jesus Christ in our personal lives, in our communities, and in the structures of our society. We must be witness to the Holy Spirit in our midst. We must share what we have received from God with all the peoples and nations of the earth through the sensitivity to culture and diversity.

³³ Lesslie Newbigin, Foolishness to the Greeks (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1986), 148.

The Understanding of Mission

Christian mission is all activities whose basic purpose is to disciple all the people of world.

I think that mission must be holistic. It must be concerned with the whole individual and the whole society. It must be concerned with the body as well as the soul. Today's mission includes the fighting for just labor laws and an equitable distribution of land, and against multinational corporations.

Therefore, I think that a statement adopted by the Directors of the Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church has a holistic idea of mission today.

The first responsibility is to enable each local church to be in mission. If mission is not happening where the congregation gathers to worship and study, it will not be long before the mission efforts elsewhere become futile and ineffective.

The second responsibility is a renewed emphasis on evangelism and church growth. The book of Acts records that where the Gospel was preached the Church grew. We can recapture the vitality which lies behind Bishop Stephen.

The third responsibility concerns the sending and receiving of missionaries. It has been said that the Christian mission, rightly understood, is to wrap ideas in people and send them. For centuries this has been the clue to the expansion of the Christian faith.

The fourth responsibility is our ministries of justice and liberation to the poor and powerless. God is the God of the oppressed. That is the consistent message of the Scripture.

The fifth responsibility concerns the empowerment of women to full participation in every part of the life of the church. The history of mission outreach is grounded in the commitment and involvement of women. In the face of despair and rejection, women have pioneered and risked much to minister to people around the world in the name of Jesus Christ.

The sixth responsibility is to work toward a truly inclusive church. We must become, in fact, what God in Christ has begun already to make us, a pluralistic people who concelebrate the diversity of God's abundant creation because of our common experience of unconditional grace.³⁴

³⁴ Quoted in Arther O.F. Bauer, comp., Being in Mission (New York: Friendship Press, 1987), 6-7.

I believe that the church is the most powerful instrument, which if implemented, is able to alleviate many social problems and ills. Mission deals with every aspect of human endeavor - economic, political, social, scientific and technological, as well as religious. Christ came into the world to inaugurate the Kingdom of God.

It is obvious that mission for the growth of Church members does not mean Jesus' mission for the people. Christianity is a universal religion that focuses on the people. The Christian as a missionary is not sent to a hunting ground to look for individuals; he is sent to share, to serve, to be as Christ was in the midst of the people, participating fully in their pain, sufferings and hopes.

The church is the body of Christ, integrated by many members with diverse functions. Churches or Christians at least must be aware of what the Lord is doing for others. The mission of the church must concentrate on spreading not only Christ's message but also the actual meaning of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I see the future with a mission that will contribute to the creation of human societies. We, as Christians, must understand the way of Christ in mission. When we do this, I believe that our task will be fruitful. Mission can be summarized in the words of Jesus Christ, "My prayer is not for them alone, I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:20-21).

The Task of the Church for Mission

Now, I would like to suggest that the churches' task is to carry out mission in our society although I have already mentioned it. I believe that the church must have visions and stewardship for mission, and an open mind to other religions with Christ's way.

First, we must have visions for mission. Worship, teaching, preaching, fellowship, and service to one another are activities of the church. Every congregation is called to be a missionary in this world. The activities of the church propel the church into the world for ministry. The church is not only the object of God's love, it is also God's instrument in effecting ministry to the world. David Bosch summarizes the vision for mission of the church as follows:

The mission of the church, then, has all the dimensions and scope of Jesus' own ministry and may never be reduced to church planting and the saving of souls. It consists in proclaiming and teaching, but also in healing and liberating, in compassion for the poor and the downtrodden. The mission of the church, as the mission of Jesus, involves being sent into the world-to love, to serve, to preach, to teach, to heal, to save, to free.³⁵

We, as Christians, have a vision for mission in order to discover immense talent and potential resource through the apostolic passion. We also have a vision that Christians share their faith, establish alive churches for Jesus and the Kingdom of God for justice, and freedom from hunger, poverty, disease and sin.

Secondly, we need dialogue with other religions as we move towards the twenty-first century in Christian mission. The important thing is how to complete Jesus' mission in modern society. How do we carry out mission in this pluralistic world? Mission is to accept other religious opinions in the pluralistic society today. Dialogue can be seen by Christians as part of the Christian mission. Mission includes the whole of Christian outreach activities outside the church. Mission encompasses evangelism, social ministries, and a prophetic critique of our contemporary setting, including interreligious dialogue. Through dialogue, we have to solve

³⁵ David J. Bosch, "Reflections on Biblical Models of Mission," in Toward the 21st Century in Christian Mission, ed. James M. Phillips (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1993), 189-90.

human problems or worldwide problems with which people are faced in the world. We need to deal with the issues of peace, justice, and the environment through interfaith dialogue.

In order to understand the mission, we respect other religions and dialogue with them with the spirit of ecumenism. Dialogue is an attitude that corresponds to God's own attitude toward humankind manifested in Jesus Christ. The dialogical attitude is one of respect for the others in their own self-definition. Dialogue is to have respect for the freedom and integrity of others, for the recognition of their right to their own religious convictions. Through the dialogue with people of other faiths, Christians can learn more about God's dealing with humanity and see the light of Christ in new places and new ways. God has been working in all creation. We have a lot to learn from all human beings about God and about what is right and helpful patterns of human life. Mission and dialogue meet in the context of a common commitment to a new humanity. The church is called to exercise this ministry with total commitment. I believe that Churches and Christians should complete the mission with spirit and an attitude of Christ.

Summary

Mission is the core of Christianity. Mission belongs to God and is for the sake of His Kingdom through God's love, care, and redemption. Therefore, Christian mission is the work of God. A theology of mission is based on the whole witness of both the Old Testament and the New Testament. God's universal redemptive covenant has continuously been working out from the Old Testament age. Through God's universal kingship, God tries to complete the goal of the *Missio Dei*.

Jesus Christ is the essential heart of the Christian Good News in the New Testament. Jesus' Great Commission is the ongoing task of mission and evangelism today. Jesus' mission

emphasized the Holistic Proclamation of the kingdom of God. Mission embraces all dimensions of human life: physical, spiritual, personal and interpersonal, communal and social, historical and eternal. Paul's vision of mission is to spread the Word to the Gentiles. Paul recognized the Gentiles as heirs of the promise of God. Paul states that mission is opened to all people.

The Gospel closely relates to a pluralistic society. There is massive human pain caused by war, torture, hunger, the uprooting of peoples, and the ruthlessness of greed. People in the world should abandon the idols of success, prosperity, peace, and satisfaction. We should repent individually and collectively for our sins of rejection and disobedience.

The church is a most powerful instrument which, when implemented, is able to alleviate social problems and ills. Therefore, mission deals with every aspect of human endeavor: economic, political, social, scientific and technological, as well as religious. In order for the church to carry out mission in this society, the church should have visions and stewardship for mission, and an open mind to other religions with Christ's way. We should respect other religions and dialogue with them in the spirit of ecumenism. Dialogue includes having respect for the freedom and integrity of others, for the recognition of their right to their own religious convictions.

CHAPTER 4

A Brief History of the Korean Church

The Protestant church was introduced at a time near the end of Chosun Dynasty when the people were desiring modernization in their daily lives. The Christians felt that without fundamental changes they could not achieve the modernization they sought. The feudalistic society could not reform the society toward the new age. They firmly believed that only through Christ could the people experience modernization.

Therefore in the beginning when the missionaries first arrived, the Korean Christian churches were looking at the missionaries as a model to find the modernization. When Christianity was first introduced, the Korean government and other intellectuals had an understanding of the difference between the Catholic Church and the Protestant churches. Most of the government officials and the intellectuals had an understanding of Catholic churches, as shown in France, which were deeply related to foreign influences. The Protestant churches emphasized that the Protestant churches were different from the Catholic Church. For example, Reverend R. J. Thomas came to Korean waters in August 1866 on board an American trading vessel, the General Sherman. An altercation with the defending Korean army ensued, the ship was set afire, and the escaping sailors were massacred. When Thomas was about to die, he stressed that he was not a Catholic priest but rather a Protestant minister.

The Korean government officials and the intellectuals had a protectorate attitude toward the Catholic Church but were more willing to accept the Protestant churches into the country. The attitude of Park Young-Hyo, who was an advocate of introducing the Protestant

churches, was representative of the government officers and other educated people's idea for enlightenment.

Protestant mission headquarters from different countries dispatched missionaries to develop a better understanding of the missionaries and the work of the missionaries. Therefore, in anticipating strong opposition from a culture that was deeply rooted in Confucianism, the missionaries set out to educate the people through health centers, schools, newspapers and publications. By doing so, the missionaries hoped to make people understand what Christianity was about and create an opportunity for the Koreans to reach the masses. Early Christianity in Korea became the bridge between modernization and traditional Korean society by introducing modern medicine and education.

Health Care Service

Health care was introduced in September, 1884 through the missionary H. N. Allen.

In December, 1884, the Queen's nephew, Min Young-Ik, was injured by a sword and was in critical condition.¹ When Korean medicine could not heal the wound, the German foreign council, named P. G. Von Mollendorff, recommended Allen to the Queen to care for Min. Even though there was a tremendous amount of opposition from the Korean medical community, through Allen's medical care, Min recovered from his near death experience and returned to normal. As a result of this, Allen gained the full trust of the Royal family. The very next year,

¹ The Institute of Korean Church History Studies, Hankook Kidokyo-eu Yoeksa, vols. 1-2 [A history of the Korean church] (Seoul: Christian Literature Press, 1989), 1: 194.

upon recommendation from Allen, a Westernized hospital was established in Korea, which was called Kwang-hae Won.²

W. B. Scranton, J. Heron and O. R. Avison followed Allen to administer the hospital. The missionary hospital was established and magnified the effect of the major influence it had on the people's attitude toward Christianity.³ Many people were suspicious and had doubts about Western civilization prior to the arrival of the missionaries, but because of the missionaries' efforts through the hospitals, the people began to change their minds.⁴ This was a good example of Protestant mission in Korea. Free-charge treatment for the poor by the Westernized hospital caused the masses to accept Christianity without any antipathy.⁵

The Catholic Church was criticized and persecuted by traditional conservatives in Korea from the beginning because of a lack of understanding about Korean culture and the political situation. While the Catholic mission to Korea had begun about 100 years before, the Protestant missionaries learned from the Catholic experiences more effective mission methods for evangelizing Korea from early on in their mission in Korea. These effective methods were to understand the social interest of the Koreans and circumstances of Korea. This was done without preaching the Gospel abruptly at the beginning of the Korean mission. This health care service for the patients was intentionally aimed not to the rich and the powerful, but to the poor and the

² Ibid., 194.

³ Kwang Sun Suh, Hankook Kidokyoeru Sae Insik [A new understanding of Korean Christianity] (Seoul: Korean Christian Press, 1985), 17-18.

⁴ Institute of Korean Church History Studies, 1:194.

⁵ 1:196.

alienated. Missionaries in Korea showed that Christianity was interested in the sick and the poor, and was working toward a better life for Koreans.

Western-Style Education of Koreans

Missionaries established schools as means of evangelizing the Koreans from the beginning of their missions. Modern schools started with the Bae-Jae School, which was established by Henry G. Apenzeller in 1886 and the E-wha women' school which was established by Mary F. Scranton.⁶ And then Kyung-Sin and Jung-Shin schools were established. Students who were coming to the new schools were interested not only in religious concerns, but also success in their lives through learning English.⁷ Through the indirect mission activities such as education and health service, Christianity in Korea permeated the masses effectively.

Even though the purpose of establishing schools was to modernize Korean society through a Western-style education, the missionaries tried to educate the Koreans with the Christian message.⁸ Missionaries who came to Korea in the early mission period were concerned about social education as a means of modernization in Korea. In fact, Western style mission schools provided an equal opportunity for the education of all Koreans, especially the common classes. These mission schools became the place of origin for nationalism in Korea. As a result, education was the foundation of evangelical work along side of health care services.

Reformation of the Old Customs

⁶ 1:197.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Man Ryul Lee, Hankook Kidokyowa Yoeksa Eusik [The Christianity of Korea and the consciousness of history] (Seoul: Gisik Sanup Sa, 1982), 18.

The missionaries did not assimilate an understanding of Korean customs and manners. After careful research, the missionaries pressured into every inch of Korean life style reform to western rationalism and Christian ethical religion.⁹ They were critical of irrational customs, and started a concentrated reformation of old social customs. To achieve this reformation, they suggested prohibition of liquor, cigarettes, opium, etc.. The missionaries thought that the modernization of Korea was to reform the old irrational custom. This reformation took the Christians to an important position in Korean society.¹⁰

The prime example of change in the old customs was the doing away with belief in superstitions. The missionaries felt that Buddhism, Confucianism, and some other miscellaneous traditional religions were inferior to Christianity and they felt a sense of superiority over other religions while doing their work. Because of the uniqueness of Christianity's Doctrine of Monotheism, the early Christians emphasized that people abandon Buddhism and other idol worship and realize the truth by becoming Christians.¹¹ The missionaries felt that the sure way for Christianity to become a fixture in Korea was to convince the people that idol worship was not the way to achieve enlightenment. This became true when people started believing in Jesus Christ, and they started to attack idol worship.

The children were taught not to practice idol worship at the village shrine and to get rid of old superstitions that their parents believed in.¹² Marriages and funerals in traditional

⁹ Ibid., 27.

¹⁰ Man Ryul Lee, Hankook Kidokyosa Teukang, 106.

¹¹ Ibid., 108.

Korean society were also pointed out as not being a Christian way. Christian publications prescribed how a Christian should behave and what kind of attitude one should have as a Christian.¹³

The people who converted to Christianity also adopted Western customs and culture at same time. While there was some resistance by traditional society, most people who converted to Christianity accepted Western culture. The challenges that were facing Christianity were similar to those Catholics faced a century before. Some Koreans reacted by trying to hold on to the old traditional ways. At the time, Christianity became an instrument of introducing Western civilization to the Koreans.

Christianity was introduced in Korea at just the right time when the country was in the process of opening its doors to the Western world. Christianity had a very great influence on breaking away from old customs. Also, as a part of the reform process, Christianity emphasized women's rights and the need for educating women as a whole. Therefore, the missionaries established women's organizations to spread Christianity.¹⁴

Missionaries reformed the old customs of the society in the beginning of Protestant mission in Korea. Christianity should have ethical responsibility in the society to reform irrational customs, and change immoral society with its ethical consciousness. This reformative will of Christianity based on the Bible and Western nationalism could change traditional Korean society.

Implementation of a Council for One Unified Korean Christian Church

¹² Man Ryul Lee, Hankook Kidokyowa Yoeksa Eusik, 32.

¹³ Ibid., 108.

¹⁴ Ibid., 114.

The churches that were introduced in the beginning were churches of the Protestant denominations with diverse theological and dogmatic backgrounds. Even though the missionaries that came to Korea from various countries and denominations were directed and supervised from the home office, they tried to cooperate in order to find a common ground to coexist in Korea where Christianity had not yet been properly introduced. As a result, a joint council of missionaries and a separate control agreement of the mission field for evangelizing Korea were developed between the denominations. The Methodists and other Protestants formed a strong association which controlled their member churches.

In 1905, the Protestant churches held a conference. The result of this meeting was that The General Council of Protestant Evangelical Missions in Korea was born.¹⁵ This Council was more than just having conferences for missionaries, but had far reaching control over how the reform movement should be advocated through a “united Protestant church.” Therefore, the Council tried to transcend the separate denominations and tried to set-up a foundation for a united church for all the denominations called “The Korean Christian Church.”¹⁶ This proposal was very seriously considered. But an agreement could not be reached and the plans for the unified church failed.

In 1910, the Council concluded that instead of trying to present a politically correct unified church, they should find a practical and effective way to deliver the messages to the Koreans by cooperating with other denominations and minimizing disagreements among the

¹⁵ Institute of Korean Church History Studies, 1: 209.

¹⁶ Ibid., 1: 209.

various denominations.¹⁷ Finally, the unification effort came to an end. Even though many Christians wanted a unification of churches, misunderstanding and some jealousies among the early missionaries became an obstacle to overcome. The reason for the failure of the unification of the churches was the opposition of missionaries because of their denominations' interests. In fact, the missionaries did not want the union of the Korean church because they tried to keep the ruling power over the Korean church.

Although the plans for a unified church failed, this became the groundwork for the Ecumenical movement. Failure of the unification of churches did not stop other works already in motion. "The Korea Mission Field," organized in 1905, was unified under one publisher, to translate and publish the Bible as well other books and publications.¹⁸ Other unified works included a Korean newspaper that published unified views of the Presbyterian church and the Methodist church. In 1908, a unified hymn book was also published.¹⁹ Other unified works included education, medical care and Sunday school management among others.

However, the Council that was founded with the idea of unification of different denominations could not overcome the factions of each denominations. Although a unified church could not be found, Christianity grew with guidance from all the different denominations.

Division of the Mission Field

¹⁷ Ibid., 1: 211.

¹⁸ Ibid., 1: 211.

¹⁹ Ibid., 1: 218.

With many missionaries from different denominations, clashes and disagreements among missionaries were anticipated. In order to avoid possible hard-feelings that might arise, an agreement was made to dispatch missionaries to different parts of the country. The purpose of this action was to avoid possible conflicts from duplicate missionary messages and also to avoid a costly waste of time and money.²⁰ A special part of this policy was that it continued cooperation between the different denominations and promoted harmony while pursuing its own ways. When there was a difference in the way that a certain denomination was conducting its missions, other denominations from other regions did not interfere with its policies. Except for three major metropolitan areas, Seoul, Pyung-yang and Won-san, all other areas were divided up so that only one denomination was represented.²¹

This was done to avoid any overlapping of messages and to avoid conflicts. In the beginning, this policy served the purpose of introducing religion to many areas with the least amount of manpower. Eventually, however, it created some regional conflicts. The different areas adopted the personality and character of the denominations that were present in the area. When this policy was continued for over 30 years, each region wanted more power for its denomination. This was probably the beginning of disputes and conflicts among the denominations in Korea, not only from the 1930s but also after the 1945 Emancipation from Japanese occupation.²² Especially because this agreement for regional representation was

²⁰ Ibid., 1: 213.

²¹ Ibid., 1: 213-14.

²² Institute of Korean Church History Studies, 1: 218.

between six denominations, when other denominations came to Korea, such as the Salvation Army, the Anglican Church and the Holiness Church, they could not participate.²³ This caused complications and trouble for all denominations to find their own mission field. Therefore, there could be no avoidance of conflict between the denominations during the early time of Korean mission. Even though the division of the mission field was to evangelize Korea effectively, it was a negative side-effect of Korean mission because of the struggle of ecclesiastical authority. This caused a schism in the Korean churches or denominations because of localism of the churches.

Nevius Method of Evangelism.

Because of all the different beliefs and backgrounds of the missionaries that came to Korea, it was very difficult to establish a unified and harmonious mission. In this difficult situation, a missionary from China, J. L. Nevius, visited Seoul in June 1890. He gave lectures on a system that he had developed while working as a missionary in China. The denominations in Korea decided to study the Nevius system and to see if it could be implemented in Korea. Nevius wanted “independent, self-reliant and aggressive native churches” for the effective mission.²⁴ After extensive research and study of the Nevius method, H. G. Underwood came to four basic points about the Nevius method:

- 1) When a person realizes he has been chosen, just let the event develop in the situation of the chosen person, and let each individual be the messenger while living among his neighbors and grow with his occupation while being Christian;
- 2) The plan of growth for a new church should be based on the ability of the church to grow and not based on unreasonable expectations;

²³ Ibid., 1: 218.

²⁴ Ibid., 1: 219.

- 3) Each church should try to develop individuals to participate within the church and each church should be responsible for its own finances. The Gospel should be delivered within the community and anyone with special abilities should be encouraged to serve the church; and
- 4) Each community should try to construct its own church based on community needs and its ability to maintain operations.²⁵

The purpose of this method was to develop a community church that represented the characteristics and abilities of natives. This was to insure that the church was self-reliant and not so dependent on the missionary and ultimately the denomination to which it belonged. Although it was researched and developed for the Presbyterian denomination, the three basic themes of the Nevius method (Self-propagation, Self-support and Self-government), became the model for the way the missionaries should approach their objectives in Korea.²⁶

Through these methods, missionaries in Korea achieved a fantastic growth in the beginning. In fact, the growth of the Korean church was due to the adaptation of Nevius mission method. Ho Jin Chun states that the Nevius method had a great effect on fostering the spirit of self-support and independence, the indigenization of the Korean church, and Bible study.²⁷ This method was an affirmative aspect that native evangelists voluntarily devoted themselves to evangelize the Koreans.

²⁵ Ibid., 1: 220.

²⁶ Ibid., 1: 223.

²⁷ Ho Jin Chun, HanKookKyoHoe SunKyo: KwaGoeui YouSan, MiRaeui BangHyang [A mission of the Korean church: A legacy of the past, a direction of the future] (Seoul: SungKwang MoonWha Press, 1993), 165-68.

However, the Nevius method hindered development of Korean religious leaders.

Kwang Sun Suh pointed out that “while missionaries stressed the self-support of the Korean church, they neglected leadership training for Korean pastors.”²⁸ The Nevius method brought about the level of its religious leaders to the common church goers. This missionary attitude toward leaders hindered the development of theology in the Korean church. Therefore, Korean pastors could have neither their own theology, nor an understanding of real ecclesiology during the period of the missionaries’ activity. Finally, due to the issue of theological education in the seminary, the Korean Presbyterian church broke into two denomination during 1950-1954.²⁹ Also, the Nevius method had tremendous effect on the development of individual churches, but did not address the problems facing the society or any other aspects that were not related to the development of the church. The negative aspects of the Nevius method were limitation on development of its leaders, and inattention to social and national concerns that still presents problems for current churches and its leaders.³⁰

The Great Religious Revival

The successes that various religions experienced in the beginning were due in part to the total commitment and devotion of its missionaries. Still the Korean churches had to deal with the social and national problems resulting from the Japanese colonization of Korea. Through the missionaries, religious schools were opened to educate the people not only about religion, but

²⁸ Kwang Sun Suh, 29.

²⁹ Ibid., 30.

³⁰ Institute of Korean Church History Studies, 1: 225.

national pride and the independence movement against the Japanese colonization. In 1902, Japan signed a treaty with England which gave them strong support; then in 1904, Japan started a war with Russia and removed all Russian influences from Korea. In 1905, the Japanese government decided to make Korea its protected state and forced the Korean government to sign an agreement and sent a Japanese superintendent to govern the country. Many patriots and educated people opposed this forced agreement and started protests all over the country. They used every available resource to send messages throughout the country. Through the newspapers, especially they censured Japan's unjust aggressions and appealed to the people throughout the country and used every avenue of diplomacy to regain national rights from Japan. Some religious leaders went so far as to fight them with arms.

They fought hard for justice, but world opinion and the clever way in which Japan colonized the country made all efforts useless. Another result of this national anger and frustration was the start of the Great National Religious Revival in 1907. At a prayer meeting of the missionaries at Won-san in 1903, a missionary named R. A. Hardie, who belonged to the Southern Methodists, impressed those in attendance with his confession of sin; and they experienced the Holy Spirit.³¹ This event started a religious revival which became stronger each year, and in January of 1907, the Jangdaehyun church in Pyung-yang became the starting point of the Great Religious Revival. A famous preacher named Kil Sun-Ju had a special spiritual power that others lacked, and he used this spiritual power to have very successful revival meetings from the very first day.

³¹ Ibid., 1: 269.

Through the revival meetings, the missionaries and the Korean churches came to realize that jealousy and disagreement are deadly to religion, and that only love could bring a total spiritual movement to its fruition. They applied love and reconciliation to find common ground. They also experienced the advent of mysterious spiritual powers. These events of experiencing mysterious spiritual powers were causes for the revival movement to become greater by reaching women and students.³² And organized evangelical works and confession of repentance became very popular throughout the country.

This revival movement was not just centered around religion but social and political aspects, as well. Overall, this movement had a tremendous influence on Korean church history. Young Hun Lee, in his book The History of the Korean Church, states that the characteristics of the revival movement and its effect are:

First, the revival movement was a strictly spiritual and moral movement. The movement was for person to genuinely confess their sins and obtain the knowledge of spiritual power and experience the event in their hearts.

Second, the misunderstanding and distrust between missionaries and Korean churches was reconciled. The wall between the missionaries and Korean church leaders was due to difference in customs, mannerisms and ways of thinking that brought bad feelings. The missionaries felt a sense of superiority and the Korean leaders were dissatisfied and antipathetic towards them. But through the revivals, they became closer and gained confidence and trust for each other.

Third, a common understanding of church was developed. Understanding that every Christian shares the common body in Jesus Christ was gained through the revival meetings. So this movement brought about the development of an organization of church hierarchy instead of individual churches.

Fourth, bible study and early morning prayer services became part of this great movement. These unique practices started in Korea and became a tradition in which no other countries practiced.

³² Ibid., 1: 272.

Fifth, evangelical work became a big part of the movement. The 1907 movement was instrumental in growing faith in Christianity. The main focus was concentration on Bible study and prayer meetings. The movement focused on attending other revival meetings to deliver the messages, and working with individuals was also emphasized.³³

With these special characteristics, the revival movement became a big part of the Korean churches. It is fair to say that the growth of Korean churches were due to these type of revival meetings. Most of the Korean churches experienced their renewal and revival by the special work of the Holy Spirit during this time.³⁴ After the revival movement, the Korean church stressed the importance of religious experience through the work of the Holy Spirit.

However, there were some negative elements resulting from the revival meetings. Through these meetings, the Korean churches became apolitical and became distant from mainstream society. Man Ryul Lee states that “the 1907 movement used religion as an excuse to not to deal with the national pain and anger.”³⁵ If the church does not neglect the responsibility of the society, it cannot realize the original mission of the church.

As a part of the 1907 movement, another important movement was organized. It was called “Korea for Christ: The Story of the Great Crusade to Win One Million Souls from Heathenism to Christianity.”³⁶ The purpose, as the title suggests, was to convert a million people

³³ Young Hun Lee, Hankook Kidokyosa [The history of the Korean church], trans. Young-Suk Suh (1978; reprint, Seoul: Concordia Press, 1982), 112-19.

³⁴ Kwang Soo Kim, Hankook Kidokyo Baeknynsa [100 year history of the Korean church] (Seoul: Research Institute of History of Korean Church, 1978), 159.

³⁵ Man Ryul Lee, Hankook KidoKyoussa Teukang 83.

to Christianity. This was brought about because the church leaders felt that the 1907 revival movement was losing its steam and the leaders wanted to keep the fire going.³⁷

To get the movement of 1909-1911 started, religious leaders began a more positive method of evangelism, more earnest prayers and a great big rallies. This did not bring very positive results, but it had a great effect on many things that led to development of their own beliefs and spreading the gospel. Also, it brought the different denominations closer together to work together. It overcame the sects and gave them the feeling of unification.³⁸

All these movements, however, were active during the period in which Japan was colonizing the country, but the religious leaders did not confront the issues facing the nation; instead, they only concerned themselves with development of the individual's religious beliefs and saving souls. This negligence of nationalism was not a very proud moment in the history of Christianity.³⁹

Christianity and Nationalism

Western religion, especially from Europe, was introduced to the continents of Africa and Asia during Europe's colonization of these continents. Christianity was introduced by infiltration of Western Europe's imperialism. Because of the nationalism and attitude of self-reliance of colonized countries, Christianity faced a difficult time gaining acceptance. Man Ryul

³⁶ Institute of Korean Church History Studies, 1: 276.

³⁷ Ibid., 1: 277.

³⁸ Ibid., 1: 281.

³⁹ Ibid., 1: 282.

Lee states in the book Hankook Kidokyousa Teukang regarding Korean Christianity and nationalism:

It was different for the Korean churches because the Japanese did not believe in Christianity and it was not difficult for nationalism and religion to work together. The history of Israel, as described in the book of Exodus, the battle of Buleset, just to name two events in many in the history of the people of Israel being persecuted by others, brought familiar hardships and trials to the minds of Korean Christians. It was also a very good model for the colonized country to fight toward national emancipation.⁴⁰

When Christianity was first introduced in Korea, it was during the period when the Chosun Dynasty had corrupted feudalism. Also, because other nations invaded the country with their politics and economic pressures, it was a time that brought about the formation of a national consciousness. Under these conditions, in order to teach a national consciousness to Christians, a new educational system was developed to teach how to view life and to have a new outlook on the world. This modern education taught equality between man and woman, self-determination and national pride. The importance of respecting individual rights and responsibilities as a citizen was taught to the people.⁴¹

Many religious leaders who studied under these notions developed a patriotic spirit about the country and the people. Christian newspapers (the Christian Advocate and the Christian News) were especially important instruments of raising national consciousness.⁴² These

⁴⁰ Man Ryul Lee, Hankook Kidokyosa Teukang 127-28.

⁴¹ Institute of Korean Church History Studies, 1: 289.

⁴² Ibid., 1: 290.

papers not only published religious articles but published useful information on social events, modern methods in farming, and new technologies in manufacturing, as well.⁴³

The Korean Daily News also played an important role in installing nationalism. In 1896, the Committee for Independence was established and, in 1898, the Committee of the People was established.⁴⁴ These organizations were heavily influenced by the religious establishment. The spirit of independence was beginning to develop among Christians. For the purpose of gaining independence from Japan, many patriots joined associations in which religion had a great influence on social reforms and modernization.

In light of Japan's continuation of aggression in Korea, the missionaries declared an apolitical stance of religion and tried to resolve the tension between the government and the church. However, the Christians could not ignore the dire position the country was in and started an anti-Japanese movement.⁴⁵ After the signing of the 1904 Protection Agreement, the Korean churches worked very hard to establish prayer meetings and tried to preserve nationalism. One could surmise that these prayer meetings were ways in which nations tragedy was solicited to God as elementary step of national movement.⁴⁶

In April 1907, the "Shinminhoe" was established in secret as an anti-Japan movement.⁴⁷ Graduates of the Sang-dong Youth School were the founding members.⁴⁸ The

⁴³ Ibid., 1: 290.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 1: 293.

⁴⁵ Man Ryul Lee, Hankook Kidogkyosa Teukang, 138.

⁴⁶ Institute of Korean Church History Studies, 1: 293.

main purpose of the movement was to regain the nation's rights as a secret organization by working internally to liquidate feudalism and to establish a modern republican system, and externally opposing transgressions from external forces. Establishing a true independent republic was the main motto of the group.⁴⁹

The People's Committee tried many ways to resolve society's problems in the area of politics, economy and education. One way to do this was to train according to the ability of the person, to raise one's national consciousness and education, and development of the nation's industrial power. The main purpose of all these efforts was to recover the rights of the country as a sovereign state.⁵⁰ Although it was named the People's Committee, many Christians were part of the movement. It is a bit far reaching to say the movement was a Christian movement, but Christianity had a great influence on the movement as a whole.

The year 1907 was the diverging point in the Korean church movement. While a religious movement was organized with the guidance of missionaries and church leaders on one side, on the other side, a secret political organization was developing to fight external aggressions.

Due to these developments, the Korean churches were split into two groups. One side emphasized personal beliefs centered around the individual's church affiliation and the other side was centered around social needs to solve social problems. There were other groups that were formed to demonstrate, to plan assassinations of traitors, and to fight the Japanese with arms.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 1: 295.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 1: 295.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 1; 296.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 1: 300-01.

These groups fought against the rulers by not paying taxes, recovering the national debt, consuming only Korean made products and every other means to weaken the rulers.⁵¹ All of these were done to recover the sovereign nation of Korea.

The worst case of religious persecution by the Japanese was called the one-hundred five person incident.⁵² This persecution was committed to remove any and all influence of the national political and religious leaders on the Korean people. Of the 123 people that were persecuted, 108 were religious leaders.⁵³ The purpose of the Japanese was to eliminate the influence of religion on the independence movement of the country, with the ultimate purpose of controlling the country itself. Many religious leaders were imprisoned and this motivated the organization of national protests against the Japanese. Through the movement of nationalism, the Korean church was interested in social salvation with social and political activities.

March 1 Independence Movement and the Christian Church

The largest demonstration that involved the church was the March 1 Independence Movement against the Japanese in 1919. The March 1 Independence Movement was the biggest and the best organized event against Japanese aggression. This event clearly demonstrated the church's leadership in society. After the illegal annexation of Korea by the forced agreements of 1905 and 1910, the Japanese ruled Korea as a colony of Japan.⁵⁴ The Japanese took away the

⁵¹ Ibid., 1: 348-50.

⁵² Ibid., 1: 308.

⁵³ Ibid., 1: 299.

⁵⁴ Institute of Korean Church History Studies, 2: 24.

freedoms, individual rights, and agricultural lands of the Korean people. The Japanese also did not allow the development of Korean culture or social interaction. Under these harsh conditions, the Korean people never lost their desire to fight for the freedom and independence of the country.⁵⁵ The oppression by the Japanese did not stop Christianity from growing. The people who were educated by Christian schools, along with the religion of Chondokyo, organized to work toward the realization of national independence. The Independence Movement of 1919 was composed of a large number of Protestant Christians. Nearly half of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were Protestants.

Not just inside the country but people from the outside joined with churches, schools, YMCA and Severance Hospital; all worked together to show support for the March 1 Independence Movement.⁵⁶ Because it involved every segment of the society, it had a huge positive effect on the morale of the country.

Man Ryul Lee writes in his book, Hankook Kidokyosa Teukang about the March 1 Independence movement in 1919: "The March 1 independence movement, which concentrated in Seoul and twelve other major cities, was mainly influenced by religious leaders. Many other declarations of independence and distribution of pamphlets were developed after the March 1 event."⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Ibid., 2: 25-26.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 2: 32

⁵⁷ Man Ryul Lee, Hankook Kidohyosa Teukang, 163.

The careful and systematic planning by the Christian churches for the March 1 demonstration from the beginning, either directly or indirectly, helped to make the event a national event rather than a regional one. As churches became more and more involved, they became targets of Japanese persecution. Although many leaders suffered from the persecution, they became a strong foundation from which many national issues could be addressed and they were able to become spiritual leaders of the suffering people.⁵⁸

After the March 1 Independence Movement, the mode of Korean churches became more clear. While there was a movement of individual belief toward mysticism, there was a movement of realistic belief in modernization. The leaders of the first movement were Kim Ik-doo, Kil Sun-joo and Lee Yong-doo, who were mainly leaders of revival movement sects. These types of wild enthusiastic revival meetings became very popular in the aftermath of the March 1 Independence movement when the nation carried a defeatist attitude. This type of religious belief, a belief in superiority mysticism, began to change in the 1930s to a Second Adventist Movement belief in end of the world. This was the beginning for the people who were escaping from reality to start believing in the coming of the Kingdom.⁵⁹

The second movement based its activities on the recovery of the nation's freedom from Japanese annexation. The leaders felt that nationalistic illumination was needed for the people to retain national identity and to keep the idea of the independence movement. The leaders felt that the people needed to be educated on many aspects of their lives and tried to

⁵⁸ Institute of Korean Church History Studies, 2: 40.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 2: 41.

reorganize the nation and the people under Christian beliefs.⁶⁰ Even after the March 1 Independence movement, the fight for independence continued both inside and outside of the country. In April 1919, a temporary government of Korea was established in China to operate from abroad to fight against Japan.⁶¹

Trials and Betrayal

Starting in 1930 and until the liberation of the country in 1945, Christianity suffered through tremendous persecution under the Japanese racial liquidation policy. The cruelty of the persecution peaked when Christians were forced to worship the Japanese deity. When Japan forced Koreans to worship the emperor of Japan and ruled the country as its colony, it was contrary to Christian beliefs, and the time when many Christians became more and more wretched. A very sticky situation was developing with Shrine worshipping. The Japanese believed that the emperor was the body of God and worshipped the emperor as God.⁶² They gave him their loyalty and total respect and made him their religion. Japan forced the Korean people to worship the emperor in order to dissolve their national identity, and to take over the country more readily.⁶³

Japan waged many aggressions against other nations. The China-Japan war in 1937 and the Sinn war in 1941 were examples of these aggressions. Japan made the land of Korea its

⁶⁰ Ibid., 2: 41.

⁶¹ Ibid., 2: 59.

⁶² Ibid., 2: 285-86.

⁶³ Ibid., 2: 273.

base and stole every available commodity, including human power, in order to dissolve the country as a viable nation.⁶⁴

In 1939, a law governing how religion should be conducted was passed. The government wanted to control religion. Through this law, the Japanese were able to direct religion in their own way. They punished the religious leaders who did not follow their orders. Religion deteriorated under these unreasonable conditions. There were several reasons for these religious persecutions. Christianity believes in one God, and worshipping an emperor or shrines is contrary to its beliefs. This was the main reason why Japan was very watchful of the churches and tried very hard to eliminate church leaders. Since the church was heavily involved in the independence movement, the Japanese always had their watchful eyes on the church and its leaders, continuously persecuting them. Also, because Christianity was introduced from the West, it was not very easy to control the thinking and opinion of the religious leaders. The Japanese policy was to use every threat or appeasement in order to control the church leaders and, if the church leaders did not follow the Japanese rule, they were put to death.⁶⁵

Starting in 1930, imperialistic militarism of Japan was the dominant force and the policy of worshipping the emperor was enforced even more forcefully. All the schools and churches were forced to submit to this policy and, naturally, the religious schools refused to follow this policy. For example, in 1935, a principal of a private religious school in Pyoung-yang who refused to follow the policy was dismissed.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Ibid., 2: 276.

⁶⁵ Institute of Korean Church History Studies, 2: 284.

Because of the power of the Japanese rulers and the continuation of threats, more and more schools started to worship the emperor as God. At first, the church had a very negative view toward emperor worshipping. However, continuing threats and appeasement by the Japanese rulers started to breakdown some of the religious leaders. The disruption policy of the Japanese started to split the opinions and views of religious leaders.⁶⁷ Different opinions started to form among the different denominations and their missionaries. Some believed that emperor worshipping was a form of idolatry which, being prohibited in the Bible, could not be followed under any circumstance, while others held the belief that this was some kind of patriotic action. Those schools that refused emperor worshipping were ordered to close down or the school was abolished altogether. Many religious schools were abolished during this period. Nevertheless, many other denominations adhered to the policy of emperor worshipping, and the national council of the Presbyterian denomination in 1938, after years of refusing the policy, decided to submit to the policy and effectively ended religious opposition to the emperor worshipping policy.⁶⁸

This submission greatly contributed to the degeneration of religion in Korea. Because it submitted to the outside pressures and persecutions, many viewed this as a disgrace to religion in general. The effect of this was that some churches held services to assist the Japanese rulers and some even organized events to pledge allegiance to Japan. Some religious leaders held

⁶⁶ Ibid., 2: 289-91.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 2: 295.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 2: 299.

meeting with leaders of Japanese religion to work together.⁶⁹ Not only that, some held prayer meetings for victory by Japan, raising funds for the Japanese military, consoling surviving families, and lecturing around the country to show loyalty to Japan. Different denominations competed against each other to show their support for Japan.⁷⁰

Religion lost its purity and, under the pressures and threats, it showed how powerless it had become. However, even under these extremely harsh conditions, a minority of Christians did not abandon their faith and refused to submit to the policy of emperor worshipping.⁷¹ Many religious leaders and denominations submitted to the Japanese rulers and became pro-Japan. Still some Christians risked their lives to hold on to their religious faith to the end. The powerlessness of the church during Japanese rule contributed to complications and disruptions after the liberation of the country.⁷² The selfish interests of different denominations and jealousies among them was one of the chief reason for not being able to oppose Japan's persecution of religion. Korean churches had a very painful experience dealing with schism within the church under the pressure of the Japanese. The Korean churches faced a major test and failed.

Reconstruction and Break-up

⁶⁹ Ibid., 2: 302-05

⁷⁰ Ibid., 2: 311.

⁷¹ Ibid., 2: 338.

⁷² Ibid., 2: 338.

Religion regained its freedom from decades of Japanese rule after the August 15 liberation in 1945. The various denominations started reconstruction movements. However, before any reconstruction, the church had to face its past and clear the consciousness of the people. Each church started its own process of absolving the pain caused by its wrongdoing. When the jailed religious leaders were released from prison, they immediately criticized those who compromised their faith and demanded moral purity by penitence.⁷³ This caused friction among the churches and further disrupted reconstruction efforts. The split among Methodists and Presbyterians was a prime example of this friction. Instead of penalizing those who assisted and supported the Japanese rule, they became a part of the newly formed government and were promoted to many important positions.⁷⁴

Therefore, the patriots who had risked their lives to fight the Japanese could not find their rightful places in the new government. The liberation from Japanese rule did not bring a new beginning because the country's failure to liquidate the past mistakes. This tragedy not only involved government agencies but the religious hierarchy, as well. Those who abandoned their faith to save their lives started to become leaders of denominations while those who risked their lives with faith could not find a place in the church hierarchy.

Even the church could not clear its past and failed to seize the moment to stand tall among its people. The Presbyterian denomination split into many different sects in 1959.⁷⁵ The

⁷³ Kyung Bae Min, Hankook Kidokyohoesa [A history of the Korean church] (Seoul: Taehan Kidokyo Press, 1982), 453.

⁷⁴ Man Ryul Lee, Hankook Kidogkyosa Teukang, 194.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 195.

Methodist's split in 1945 into those favoring the revival movement and those favoring reconstruction. However efforts to combine these two factions were successful and the Methodists became one body in 1949.

According to Young Hun Lee, the reason behind the fighting among the churches and the eventual break-up of the denominations was as follows:

Our people have an ingrained idea of faction conscious and regional passions. Individual ambition played a big part also. After the liberation from Japanese rule, missionaries from many minor sects came in and competed with more established missionaries who had contributed to the break-up of the churches. Secularization, degradation, leaders losing grace, inability of leaders, laziness of leaders, wanting God's grace but unable to distinguish right and wrong among church goers, blind devotion of woman members, and fraudulent missionaries who misrepresented the religion: There are many reasons for the break-up of the churches but these reasons either by themselves or combined with others contributed to the break-up of churches.⁷⁶

Many reasons, especially a lack of church leader's ethical consciousness, caused the break-up of the churches.

The Korean War caused a great deal of loss and injury to the people. This was the greatest tragedy in modern Korean history. The church suffered a great deal also. When the Communists from the North occupied part of South Korea, they persecuted church leaders and destroyed many churches. Many Christians were arrested, kidnapped, and even murdered. Some died in prison while being tortured.⁷⁷ Even while this was happening, some Christians betrayed their brothers and their religion by welcoming the invading Communists of North Korea.⁷⁸ The

⁷⁶ Young Hun Lee, 235.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 265-67.

⁷⁸ Kyung Bae Min, 464.

same tragedies that had happened during the Japanese colonization were happening again during the Korean civil war. The only thing the churches could do during this national tragedy was to pray, but they were not able to fulfill their responsibility. The break-up of the churches continued during the war. The failure of the churches to unite under the national tragedy was a big disappointment to many people.

The crisis and uneasiness caused by the war had an effect on religion, as well. The religion movement had a tendency to be more enthusiastic and it emphasized belief in eschatology. During this period of confusion, heretical religions started to come of age.⁷⁹ The Young Moon San Prayer Sanctuary established by Woon Mong Na, the Unification Church of Sung-Myung Moon, and the Evangelism of Tae-Sun Park were the main heretical religions that disrupted many church goers.⁸⁰ Because these religions came about during the time of uncertainty, they became very popular among many who could not find answers from traditional religions. Some of these religions still exist today and attract many people.

The 1960's Korean Church: Effort of Unification, Theological Movement
of Lay Believers, Settling Disputes and Evangelical Movements

From 1950 to 1960, the tragedy of the break-up of the Presbyterian denomination continued, but the April 19 military revolution awakened religious leaders. The church was questioning how it could enlist students and the population to get them involved in serving God. Also, it voiced opposition to military rule and demonstrated to have power transferred to civilians.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 470.

⁸⁰ Young Hun Lee, 284.

It also opposed the humiliating diplomatic negotiations with Japan. It was finally serving God by being moral leaders of the population.⁸¹

However, not all of the churches were participating in the church innovation movement. After the Korean war, some churches were devoted to the development and growth of the church and the saving of individual souls. There were many revival meetings and evangelical assemblies. In 1965, all the different denominations came together to designate the year as the year of evangelism and came up with the motto “30 million People to Christ,” and they started feverish evangelical revival meetings.⁸² This movement came during the time when the fighting among denominations was very intense and showed that religious leaders could work together.

In 1963, the theological movement for lay believers started to gain in popularity. This movement was to present the whole world with the whole gospel. Instead of pastors being the center of the evangelism, the lay believers became the center of evangelism. In fact, because the Korean church was a pastor-centered church, lay believers just followed pastors’ directions. Since the church represents the body of Jesus Christ, every believer could share the righteousness that is represented by Jesus Christ. The duty of the believer was not just to spread the word of God or to live a clean life, but rather to be evidence of and to be of service to God’s wishes. The recognition of changes in attitudes brought about the introduction of the Ecumenical movement to Korea.

⁸¹ Ho Kyung Kwon, Kyohoeui Yebaewa Sunkyoeru Ilchi [Worship of the church and agreement of the mission], ed. Press Committee for a Commemorative Essay of 60th Birthday Anniversary (Seoul: Korean Christian Press, 1990), 417.

⁸² Young Hun Lee, 365.

Summary

When the Protestant church was introduced, early Christianity in Korea became the bridge between modern civilization and traditional Korean society by introducing modern medicine and education. Missionaries in Korea showed that Christianity was interested in the patients and the poor, and was working toward a better life. Early Christianity completed ethical responsibility in the society to reform irrational customs based on the Bible and Western nationalism.

Even though the missionaries came to Korea from various countries and denominations, they tried to cooperate in order to find a common ground to coexist in Korea. Therefore, a unification effort for one unified Korean church was very seriously considered. However, this effort came to an end because of misunderstandings and jealousies among the missionaries. Finally, the Korean church could not overcome the factions of each denomination. The Korean church still has a problem of cooperation and ecumenical movement between churches and denominations. Division of the mission field was done to avoid any overlapping of messages and conflicts. Even though the division of the mission field was to evangelize Korea effectively, it caused a struggle of ecclesiastical authority by localism.

The Nevius method of mission in Korea was a representative mission method. Even though the Nevius method had a great effect on fostering the spirit of self-support and independence, it neglected the development of church leaders, and failed to pay attention to social and national concerns. Through the Great National Religious Revival Movement in 1907, the Korean churches experienced a renewal and revival by the special work of the Holy Spirit. Even

though this 1907 Movement had a great effect on the growth of the Korean church by emphasizing individual religious beliefs, it neglected its responsibility for the society.

After the March 1 Independence Movement, while activities for the recovery of the nation's freedom from Japanese annexation were started, many churches had enthusiastic revival meetings when the nation was in a serious predicament. Because of the power of the Japanese rulers and the continuation of threats, schools and churches started to worship the emperor as God. However, even under these extremely harsh conditions, a minority of Christians did not abandon their faith and refused to submit to the policy of emperor worshipping. Therefore the Korean churches had a painful experience dealing with schism within the church under the pressure of the Japanese.

With the freedom of August 15, 1945, from the occupancy of Japanese, the various denominations started a reconstruction movement. However, those who abandoned their faith to save their lives became leaders of denominations, while those who risked their lives with faith could not find a place in the church hierarchy. This caused a split in the churches and denominations. The break-up of the churches continued during the Korean War.

After the 1960s, the Korean churches were participating in a church innovation movement. Churches were devoted to the development and growth of the church and the saving of individual souls. There were efforts at unification of the churches and denominations through evangelical revival meetings and the ecumenical movement. And the theological movement for lay believers started to gain in popularity. It showed that the lay believers had become the center of evangelism.

CHAPTER 5

Problems Facing the Korean Church

The Korean church has grown remarkably in quantity within a comparatively short period as has been shown through the previous chapters. There were many factors for church growth in Korea. Dal Soo Hur summarized some factors of church growth in Korea as follows:

(1) Religious factors were shown in the shamanistic influence which positively influenced the Korean people to remain open for the Gospel.

(2) The second factor is the social aspect which was seen as the sense of crisis that forced the people to pull into the church. Church growth during six years in the early 1960s which was a chaotic period due to the political and economic difficulties, exceeds that of the whole previous 60 years.

(3) A spiritual factor concerns the work of the Holy Spirit and the strong emphasis on the authority of the Scriptures. This led Christians to be involved in zealous Bible study in the church.

(4) Urbanization and industrialization helped the church to grow. During the 1970s Christians in the rural areas poured into urban areas, resulting in the rapid growth of the urban population. These new dwellers in the urban area had unstable living circumstances, which moved the people into the church. They sought something helpful to stabilize their settlement in their search for a better future.

(5) A discipleship movement was an important part of Korean church growth. This was directly related to the laity motivation.

(6) Strategic factors were represented by the principles of autonomous church management. The basis of this movement was the confidence that the Holy Spirit works for the independence of the church.

(7) Active leadership of the church was one of the most important factors for church growth in Korea.

(8) There was also the homogeneous unit church movement factor. We can say virtually no single individual was alienated from any homogeneous unit. The Korean people traditionally maintain their ties with intimate people: family, clan, neighbor, village, school, and business colleagues, and many from their daily life.

The idea of intimacy helped Christians to have the opportunities to witness their faith to their neighboring people, which eventually caused the church to grow.

(9) The charismatic movement, and especially, the churches that stressed divine healing and the blessings of the present world attracted people into the churches, even though this movement had been criticized by some of the conservatives, as well as the liberals.

(10) There was a strong emphasis on evangelism by the church members. Churches had programs to enhance this movement throughout the year and set specific events to encourage the congregations into evangelism.¹

Through these factors, Christianity in Korea has grown in quantity, and has become a major religion in Korean society. There were some other factors which influenced the Korean church to grow remarkably other than the above mentioned factors. People in favor of evangelistic rallies gathered in huge numbers from some 10 thousand to a million during the 1970s and the 1980s. This encouraged Christians to awake themselves for the responsibility of saving souls.

Another factor was economic growth of the nation. As Koreans had significant economic growth, the church had stable finance in order to build their own church buildings and to support their own pastors with adequate living expenses. Meanwhile, as a critical view, the national economic growth hindered the healthy growth of the Korean church, because many churches had grown in the atmosphere of strong concerns about this world.

¹ Dal Soo Hur, "The Foreign Mission of the Korea Presbyterian Church (Tonghap)" (D.Min. Project, Fuller Theological Seminary and Asian Center for Theological Studies and Mission, 1987), 98-99.

Emphasis on prayer in the churches was the central power of the church. It gave the motivation for Christians to reach out to neighbors with the enthusiasm of saving the dying souls for Christ. It was very characteristic of the Korean church to feel a strong obligation to pray which, in fact, they did not learn from the Western missionaries.

Willing offerings of the church members were one of the most important factors for the growth of the Korean church. This was the most decisive factor for the Korean churches to have their own buildings. These factors brought about the remarkable growth of the Korean church. There are several possible reasons that might have hindered the growth of the church. At the same time, there were many positive factors that helped the Korean church to grow. It is important to diagnose any problem and strength in the church and its mission movement, so that we can discover suitable treatment for future problems, or promote the positive aspects.

Concentration on Growth and Materialism in the Korean Church and Society

Even though the history of Protestant Korean Christianity is only 110 years old, the growth has been very successful in every sense. At a time when religion was declining very fast in Western Europe, where the religion originated, the growth of Christianity in Korea is all the more remarkable. This growth shocked the world's religious community and was a very proud moment for Korea. This incredible growth had far reaching effects on the society and the church. The growth of the Korean church can be divided into three-parts: cultural, church, and social aspects.²

As a cultural factor, the Korean people generally are very religious people. The traditional religions have developed because of the Korean peoples' devotion to religion.

² Won Gue Lee, Hankook Kyohoeui Sahoehakjeok Leehae [The sociological interpretation of the Korean church] (Seoul: Sungseo Yonkusa, 1992), 234.

Buddhism and Confucianism were already accepted as national religions before Christianity was introduced. This is how the population accepted Christianity and, through this new religion, people attained spiritual enlightenment, a sense of being sure of themselves, which all became positive aspects of the religion. The introduction of modernism and reformation by the early missionaries had a very positive effect on the growth of Christianity.

The primary factor of the church was that it emphasized self-support and self-reliant policies from the beginning. This policy played a central role in the development of individual churches, and does so even to this day. Every church put its very best efforts to grow separately. Every leader developed strategies to grow. Especially after the 60s, and 70s, spiritual movements grew where revival meetings, prayer retreats, all night vigil services and Bible study groups were developed to serve the needs of members. The efforts of churches had a great effect on the growth of the church. However, the growth of churches after the 1970s can be attributed to politics, social needs, and the economic development of the country as a whole.

After the Korean War, the instability of the political situation brought about many problems. Dictatorship, totalitarian rules, and the fear of invasion from the North all contributed to the unstable political situation. Even during the 70s, oppressions brought on by dictatorship was the main source of dissatisfaction and distrust among the people. The people were looking for something to stabilize the political situation and to provide the promised land.³

³ Ibid., 235.

The answer to this was the Christian religion. Christianity gave the people the comfort and sense of security that was lacking because of the political instability.⁴ Christianity tried to comfort those in distress and provide them answers by introducing God into their lives. The Korean church was a shelter from the instability of the political situation in Korea.

The growth of the economy played a very important role in the growth of the Korean church. Starting in 1960, the Korean government began a great five-year economic development plan. The economy grew by leaps and bounds. The economy grew by ten-percent every year during 1960-1990. Exports increased. Personal disposal income rose. In 1963, the GNP was \$ 83 per person. In 1995, the GNP was \$ 10,000 per person. Consequently, the standard of living became much higher each year and the people became more and more materialistic. This mentality affected church leaders who wanted a bigger and bigger congregation. The economic development did not distribute the wealth evenly. Many people were dissatisfied with their economic situation. Many of these people were attracted to the church to provide them comfort and to bless them to become wealthier. The church not only provided stability and peace in the minds of the people, it also provided physical well-being and economic growth, as well.⁵

The fantastic economic growth gave the people a desire for more materials and money and not peace and equality for every person. The Korean church tends to pursue individual happiness and blessing, rather than to worship with a deep gratitude of salvation for the

⁴ Ibid., 235.

⁵ Man Ryul Lee, Hankook Kyohoewa Shinhakeun Udiro [The future of Korean church and theology], ed. Christian Academy (Seoul: Christian Academy, 1988), 96.

glory of God. The people were seeking wealth and abundance, and were proud of extravagance and economic prosperity. They stressed the blessing of materials, business and honor rather than the justice of God's world. The people were asking the church to bless them to become wealthy rather than trying to find happiness, love, and justice in religion.

Beginning in 1960, Korea changed from an agricultural nation to an industrialized nation. Consequently, people started to move to cities to upgrade their standard of living.⁶ This sudden transformation brought many unexpected problems; especially the breaking up of families and, the loss of their identity were prime examples.⁷ The society started to lose its individual character, its personality and human relationship. Lee points out that in this type of environment, religion should be able to provide answers to many of the problems facing the urbanities.⁸

The church became the place where people could turn to find whatever was needed in their lives. The fact that the church provided stability, a promised land, comfort, satisfaction, and a sense of belonging to the people, which in turn was instrumental in psychological comfort to social needs, should be recognized.⁹

Belief System of Growth of the Korean Church

After the decade of 1960-1970, Korean churches had great growth in quantity and churches were becoming quite large. There occurred an increase in church membership, ministers

⁶ Won Gue Lee, 237.

⁷ Ibid., 237.

⁸ Ibid., 237.

⁹ Ibid., 238.

and seminaries, the prosperity of Christian publishing businesses, the establishment of retreat and prayer centers, the dispatch of foreign missionaries, and special evangelical meetings on a huge scale.

However, there were some problems in the back of external growth in the Korean churches. The very first problem was the mentality of materialism was accepted. Being wealthy was the evidence of being blessed. The church tried to accommodate this mentality by asking God to bless their members to make lots of money.¹⁰ This mentality was very selfish and individualistic. This kind of faith did not promote the well-being of neighbors nor the society in general, but was only concerned about the individual. If the function of the church was to promote individual wealth and individual blessings, then something was not right with the way modern churches were evolving. Churches were apt to disregard the responsibility to society, and forget to practice the principles, of love and justice.

When the church became materialistic, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, it lost its social responsibilities and could not function effectively. When modern churches were examined, their main concern was how to be bigger than the church in the neighboring block. Everything had to be bigger than last year, bigger than the next church, and bigger than any other church. Rev. Robert Shuller had an especially big influence on the development of this church mentality. The church tried to solicit big donations from members in exchange for blessing them to become more wealthy.¹¹

¹⁰ Ibid., 240.

¹¹ Taek Jin Lim, Hankook Kyohoe Wigi Sangwhang [Serious situation of the Korean church] (Seoul: Kidokyomoonsa, 1991), 76.

A prime example of this “bigger church is a better” mentality occurred when some churches decided to tear down a building to build a bigger building; but a few years later, they decided that bigger building was too small, so they tore it down again to build an even bigger building. Of course, in order for the church to do this, it needed bigger donations from its congregation. The members donated huge sums of money because the members figured God would be pleased and that they would be blessed to make more money. Not only was this mentality developing in large churches, individualism in the church was growing at the same time.

This individualism ignored national denominations and only concerned itself with the well being of the individual church itself. Each wanted to become so large that it could set-up its own Kingdom.¹² Consequently, cooperation among churches was shunned and each church wanted to send its own missionaries to set up its own satellite church. This policy might have been beneficial to growth of the individual church, but it had negative effects on serving God. This could have undermined the whole of Christianity because the churches did not work together for the glory of God. This church would remain exclusive.

It is natural for churches to grow bigger as the number of members grew and donations became bigger and bigger. So what was the problem? The church represents a body in which one believes that Jesus Christ is the Savior and whoever believes in that will be saved. The size of the Church building, the size of the congregation and the size of the donation should not make any difference to this main purpose of the church. The early missionaries thought about what could be done to help the people and the country, before they thought of how the

¹² Won Gue Lee, 240.

church should be built. They built schools to educate people; hospitals were built to treat the sick and poor people. Their mentality was to serve God for the betterment of the people and the country.

Now we are mainly concerned with enlarging in everything. This is not following in the steps of Jesus Christ. The mentality of accumulating possessions and power as God's blessings is prevalent in today's society. The problem with the mentality of current churches is that they are only concerned about their own affairs with themselves while ignoring the problems of those less fortunate churches. Because of urbanization, the churches in cities are becoming richer and richer, while the rural churches are becoming weaker and in danger of closure.¹³

The individualism in church mentality is causing friction and competition among neighborhood churches. Instead of supporting and cooperating with each other, each church is treating other churches as competitors for members, donations, and social status. Some church members have the misconceived notion that bringing in members from other churches is evangelizing, and they use every technique at their disposal to steal members from other churches.

Even though it is true that the Korean Church has grown incredibly during the past 110 years, it is gradually entering a retarding phase. It is starting to show an old age syndrome. Many large churches exist for several years with little or no growth at all. Some churches are even gradually declining in membership today.

The church has been criticized, especially by the young generation, that it has very little or no concern for the matters of society and the country as the church was, especially in the

¹³ Chong Yoon Lee, ed. Hankook Kyohoeui Chongkyo Kaehuk [Religious reformation of the Korean church] (Seoul: Emmaus, 1988), 111.

struggle for the democratization of the nation and the reformation of society. It is criticized also for its super-materialistic wealth, while it gives very little towards society. Therefore, a serious problem in the Korean church now is that it tends to fail to attract the younger generation, and they are leaving it. Except in a limited number of churches, there is a serious generation gap, with a small number of young people, in the churches, who could be leaders in the coming decades. They feel alienated in the church due to irrelevant programs, such as the pastors' sermon, and church management and structure.

A Lack of Morality

The single biggest problem facing Korean society is the issue of morality. The continuing report of crimes from various parts of the society is a prime example. The lack of ethics in politics, economics, and in social morality has brought about today's disorderly situation. The lack of morality in the society is the leading cause of decadence in the social order.¹⁴

Morality plays a huge role in stabilizing society, maintaining order, and unifying society. Moral responsibility is a crucial element in keeping social order and unifying the country as a nation. When this morality has collapsed, society becomes an anomaly or social disorganization.¹⁵ This moral responsibility starts with politicians. The politicians in Korea had dictatorship and the pressure of personal right.¹⁶ When the politicians did not keep their promises, unreasonable pledges, appeasement and fighting among politicians brought about

¹⁴ Won Gue Lee, 196.

¹⁵ Ibid., 197.

¹⁶ Ibid., 199.

distrust by the people. This was one of the main reason for the spreading of distrust throughout the population. When two former presidents of Korea have been charged and are in confinement, it shows how corrupt the politicians are. In the end, the people are the ones who have suffered the most. Due to the immorality of the politicians, people have had strong discontent and distrust about political authority.¹⁷

The lack of morality also can be found in the economic system. Because of governmental policies of preferential treatment for big businesses, they receive the best deals when receiving loans, big breaks in taxes and other expenses, while the laborers and farmers receive low wages and lower prices for farm goods.¹⁸ The concentration of wealth among the few and lack of economic morality is the basic reason for the current crisis. The capitalistic society should be able to distribute its wealth more equally, but when this fails, economic unrests develop. The law is usually enforced with a strong hand. Because of this, trying to use tax reform to redistribute the wealth failed. Under unfair preferential treatments, the richer got richer. People with small incomes experienced absolute poverty; the middle income people felt relative poverty. In this situations, over-indulgence of material things became a way of life in Korea.¹⁹

This lack of morality in economics emphasized economic growth, which promoted a materialistic society. The result of all this was that, instead of working for social and economic equality, wealth and material things became the most respected goals in minds of the people. The

¹⁷ Ibid., 201.

¹⁸ Ibid., 201.

¹⁹ Ibid., 203.

mentality of money being the answer to everything became the overall attitude of the people. This showed the overall decay of social morality in Korean society. As a result, the society lost focus on what is right and wrong in regards to how to spend the wealth. Therefore, instead of being just and righteous, people wanted to obtain wealth and did not care how it was obtained. More and more businesses were catering to people willing to spend their money for amoral things. The basic attitude of the people was to enjoy the moment while they could. This moral decay brought about a lack of respect for human life. There were incidents of selling humans for money, killing people for money, and other inhumane treatment just to make some money. As a result, a dissolving family structure, crime, and problems with youth delinquency became social problems. All these are the result of a lack of morality.

In these amoral times, what is the church doing as the moral leader of the society?

The church must be able to provide moral guidance and spiritual leadership. Even though 20 percent of the population is Christian, the morals of the country are getting worse. The churches response to the needs of the society is very weak. The Korean churches have mainly concentrated on individual salvation and church growth. Even though the church should be the leader in social development, the church has not been able to provide that leadership. That is because the church does not have the power to reform society. The decay in morality has reached the church and some in society are saying that the church is the one that should reform itself. This indicates that church is part of the problem that is facing the society in general. When the church is mainly concerned with enlarging itself instead of teaching and studying the Bible, its leaders lose their effectiveness. Therefore, the Korean church should be opposed to a speculative spirit,

materialism, and extreme egoism, which are based on individualism. The Korean church should establish Protestant ethical responsibility.

The Split among Denominations

In the history of Protestant churches, fighting among the clergy, fighting among its members and splitting into various factions is so prevalent that one can not ignore this embarrassing past. The Protestant churches in Korea have direct relations with the Protestant churches in the United States. Mission headquarters of the Presbyterians and the Methodists and other missions sent missionaries to Korea. The splitting into different factions of Christianity can be trace back to from the beginning of Korean mission, when the missionaries agreed to divide up the country in order to set up missions. The country in which these missions originated, the Unites States, also was divided by geography and also by race.²⁰ These different denominations came to Korea. Thus, it is not very surprising that splits occurred among Korean Protestants.

The Nevius method of missionary work was an example of success. Its emphasis on self-mission work, self-determination and self-reliance was ultimately limited to the individual churches. Missionary work with Koreans' own effort was limited to participation in the church's development and its desires. Self-determination was also limited because, as long as the power to set rules was in the hands of the missionaries, it was up to the individual church. Moreover, self-reliance meant economic independence, but each church's property was obtained from its members donations and after the organization, the missionaries were paid.²¹

²⁰ Kwang Sun Suh, 43.

²¹ Ibid., 45.

As a result, the meaning of church was to gather members, obtain a sanctuary and pay the ministers. The Nevius method encouraged power for the individual church. The Korean churches had many members and there were many churches, but they did not have the organizational will to provide a united front. Had the Nevius method emphasized united efforts in all aspects of missions, it could have eliminated the crucial lack of unity among the Korean churches of today. The Nevius policy emphasized the individualism of the church and stressed a selfish attitude in the individual church. This policy did not allow the participation of religious leaders and the churches in any national events, and the missionaries had complete control of all matters. When the religious leaders and the church were not allowed to participate in any united events, it was not possible for united efforts to succeed. The Nevius policy did not emphasize theological studies. The result of this policy was that the religious leaders could not grow with the church, and the development of theology lacked tremendously. Because the Nevius method emphasized development of the individual church, the overall growth and development of national unity was not developed, and it served as a problem for development in the future. On the other hand, the Korean churches wanted to by-pass religious denomination and establish the "Korean Christian Association."²²

Kwang Sun Suh states: "Some missionaries theorized that the reason for the inability for the Korean churches to unite is 1) the nature of the Korean people who just cannot unite under any circumstances; 2) After the liberation from Japan and after the end of the Korean War,

²² Institute of Korean Church History Studies, 1: 211.

failure to peacefully divide the countries for missionary work, when instead it became competition among missions.”²³

The failure of the Korean churches to unite after opportunities were presented is the major reason for the current problems. (The Korean churches failed after the end of Japanese colonization; it also failed to organize after the end of Japanese colonization; and it also failed to organize after the end of the Korean War.) Because of the War, the Korean churches suffered heavy casualties and was not able to be self-reliant and had to rely on donations from missions. This ultimately caused the division of churches.²⁴

The dividing of the Korean peninsula following the Korean War contributed to the division within the church. An anti-Communist faction that belonged to The National Association of Evangelism demanded that, to preserve the purity and superiority of the church, they could not be part of any group that supported Communism, and it split from the group while demanding the cessation of all activities relating to the Ecumenical movement.²⁵ As a result, the Presbyterian churches suffered a division into the Tong-Hab sect and the Hab-Dong sect.

Instead of uniting after the painful Korean War, because of a difference in the approach to teaching faith and politics, the churches had to suffer from an inability to unite. When examining the continued break-up of Korean churches, it is no longer the difference in approaches to religion; but it is due to bad feelings; a desire for personal power, and wanting

²³ Kwang Sun Suh, 43.

²⁴ Ibid., 81.

²⁵ Ibid., 87.

more power and recognition of the church; and regionalism. A serious problem is competition between denominations and churches. Each church or denomination wants to show up its external power to the people and other churches. And the Korean church does not get along with other churches. Any organization can have disagreements. However, an organization, especially church organizations, should be able to work out the differences. The Korean church should put more effort into trying to resolve the differences. The church should be the hope and model for the general public, instead of showing its ugliness.

Summary

Even though the Korean church has grown remarkably in quantity within a comparatively short period of time, there are several problems in the Korean mission. First of all, the Korean churches have been interested in the growth and materialism for the success and blessing of their lives. The growth of the economy played a very important role in the growth of the Korean church. This fantastic economic growth gave the people a desire for more materials and money, resulting in a disregard for peace and justice for the kingdom of God. Therefore, the church became the place where people could turn to find whatever was needed in their lives. Secondly, Korean churches have been more interested in larger churches through the growth of membership. A serious problem of the larger church is based on the mentality of materialism. This mentality is very selfish and individualistic. Churches were apt to disregard their responsibility for society. The mentality of abundance of material things and power as being a blessing from God is prevalent in today's society.

When the church became materialistic, it lost its social responsibilities. It is natural for churches to grow larger as the number of members increases and donations rise in their

amounts. The churches in cities are becoming more wealthy. Therefore, the individualism in church mentality is causing friction and competition among neighborhood churches.

The lack of ethics in politics, economics, and in social morality has brought about today's disorderly situation. Moral responsibility is a crucial element in keeping social order and unifying the country as a nation. The Korean church did not fully provide moral guidance and spiritual leadership. Even though 20 percent of the population is Christian, the morality of the country is declining.

When examining the continued break-up of Korean churches, we see that it is due not only to the difference of theology and belief, but is also due to ill feelings; a desire for personal power, and wanting more power and recognition; and regionalism. The Korean church has been divided into many fractions although the meaning of the church is One Universal Catholic church.

CHAPTER 6

A New Vision for Mission in Korea in the Twenty-first Century

As previously stated, even with fantastic growth, Korean churches have many problems. To prepare for the twenty-first century, it must address these problems and resolve them in order for it to survive in the next century. A new vision is needed to meet the needs of the twenty-first Century. These are some of the ideas for preparing the Korean churches for the next century.

Become a True Church

Not fully understanding the role of the church is the root of the problem. In the next century, the church needs to play an important role in the peaceful unification of the two Koreas. However, it is not ready to assume a leadership position as of this moment. The church or its leaders have accepted some of the social ills into church. This must be eliminated before any progress can be made. Instead of providing spiritual leadership, it is mainly concerned with increase in membership for individual churches and denominations.

Church pastors should overcome their super-star syndrome which is prevailing in Korean churches today. This brings many problems, one after another. The pastor might be concerned more with his own image building, rather than the image of Jesus Christ. He might be involved too much in the development of his own church, while lacking cooperation with other churches and denominations, which could result in ecclesiological myopia. The Korean church needs to reconfirm its ecclesiology, which is to be properly based on the Scriptures. The church does exist alone. The basis for need of the church is that the church was established by the calling

of God. In order to exist, Christianity should not lose the essentials of the church. A true church exists as the people of God and the body of Christ, and presents the continuity of the work of Holy Spirit. The mission of the church is to realize the work of God. The church's mission is not to dominate someone or something, but serve the world, and liberate the oppressed.

God called the church in order to send His message to the world. To be sent to the world is another basis for the need of the church. The church which was called and sent should follow and practice with God's intention, that of saving the world and history.¹ This is "Missio Dei." It is not "Mission Ekklesia" that in which the church dominates others as a master. The church, which is called as a community of God's people, exists in the center of the world. The church should proclaim and realize God's intention as a tool of mission among the issues of the world, nations, society, politic, family and school.

The real ministry of the church is to make up the body of Christ in and through, and with the community of God's people, whom God called. It includes the proclamation of the Gospel, healing of souls, the reconciliation of discordant people, the liberation of the oppressed, and the spiritual growth of good human personality. The church should provide the grounds on which Missio Dei can be realized and a true confession of faith can come from depths of one's heart. The church should emphasize respect for human rights, and the importance of human lives. Being self-indulgent is not the Christian way.

Therefore, the church should announce that avarice is the idol in this society, and unnecessary exclusive possession and excessive expense is to steal something from others, and it

¹ Jong Wha Park, Pyeongwha Shinhakkwa Eumenical Woondong [Theology of peace and the ecumenical movement] (Seoul: Korean Theological Institute, 1991), 221.

is not the essence of faith. The church should be a community which educates and practices the importance of human life and values. Now the Korean church should convert from the theology of abundance and growth to the theology of healthy stewardship. Through the recovery of ecclesiology, the Korean church should have an attitude of pious life, escaping from the magic of material and growth.

The Repentance and Morality Movement

The Korean church above all needs repentance in order to cleanse its wrong doing of the past. From the period of Japanese occupation to the dictatorship of military authorities, the Korean church did not complete its mission, nor did it oppose political oppression and exploitation in the middle of military dictatorship. The Korean church should repent and reform to cleanse its faults with which church leaders were connected with an illicit union of political power. It should repent because the phenomenon of a lack of morality in society is the responsibility of Korean Christianity. The church's reticence about political issues and the church's excessive emphasis on the faith of abundance and blessing conflicts with God's justice. The early Korean church had the movement of repentance with the work of the Holy Spirit. While the Korean church now stresses the blessing and Grace of God for the better life, it neglects repenting of its sins and wrong doings. The church should recover its sincerity through the movement of repentance.

The Korean church needs to be renewed in order to realize God's justice and peace in society. The church has to solve social issues. The church should have a prophetic mission for the masses. Also, the church has an interest in, and should deal with, the issues of the poor. The issue of the poor is closely related to the economic system of the nation and the world as a

structural problem. The problem of the poor cannot be solved by individual effort alone.

Therefore, it is wrong that wealth means the blessing of God, and poverty is due to one's own fault.

A repentance movement of the church links to the recovery movement of morality.

The Korean church should be an example of morality in the depraved society. The church should announce that all people are equal in God's sight, but there are still problems of class, race, sex and age in the inhumane society of today. The Korean church suggested the prohibition of liquor, cigarette, opium and the keeping of a concubine; tried to practice social movement; and to oppose the Japanese occupation from the early age of the Korean church, because it, religiously and morally, had the intention of reformation and proper guidance to Korean society. Recovery of morality can start from the self-reformation of Korean church. The church's mission is to play the role of light and salt among the immoral and pleasure-seeking society. The Korean church should correct and reform hypocrisy, falsity and prejudice within the church and the society through following God's message.

The Korean church, first of all, needs a morally fresh inner-reformation with the consciousness of faith today. Furthermore, the Korean church stands at the head of democratization of politics, equalization of economy and well-being of the society, and opposes secular power with the Gospel.

The Ecumenical Movement of the Korean Church

Reflecting on the split into factions of individual churches and denominations in Korea, the church should form unions and an Ecumenical movement. Even though the Korean church started from a denomination-centered church, it tried to unite and make an ecumenical

movement of the Korean church beyond denominations through the union and social movement.²

In 1959, the Ecumenical movement was in trouble because the Korean Presbyterian Church was divided into two factions, Hap-dong and Tong-hab, due to an issue of ecumenical ideology. In the 1960s, the Korean church tried to practice an industrial mission and the prophetic function of the church.³ In the 1970s, against the regime of military dictatorship, the Korean church should form ecumenical movement such as industrial mission, mission of the poor and the peasant, and the movement of students and youth. Due to political, social and economical oppression and dictatorship in Korea, the Ecumenical movement has made an agreement, charging infringement of human rights, and has worked with the oppressed, the poor and the weak people for the issues of ideology, the division of the Korean peninsula, etc..

Even in the 1970s and the 1980s, individual churches and denominations had grown in quantity; they continuously broke up into lots of factions again and again. The Korean church should solve the problem of individual churches and denominations. There are four or five churches in the same business building in Korea. The Korean Presbyterian church has split into 50 denominations.⁴ The church, as a body of Christ, which stresses reconciliation and agreement is divided into many pieces because of conflict between church leaders and a lack of understanding about the church's mission. With the development of the economy and industrialization after the 1970s, the Korean church could not solve the conflicts between the

² Kwang Sun Suh, 82.

³ Ibid., 88.

⁴ Christian Academy, ed. Hankook Kyoheowha Shinhakeun Udiro [The future of Korean church and theology], (Seoul: Baekhab Press, 1988), 104.

urban area and rural area, between the wealthy and the poor, between men and women, between Young- Nam and Ho-Nam area, and between employers and employee in the society. Because the Korean church did not solve the split of their churches and denominations, it could not have the ability to treat the split and conflict of the society. Now the Korean church should have the responsibility to solve the above-mentioned problems as a moderator or reconciliatory.

While many churches and denominations wanted the blessings of wealth and growth of the church, some groups or institutions and the ecumenical movement tried to unite not only for democratization, the peace of the Korean peninsula and reunification, but also for elimination of social problems and evil.

The Ecumenical movement of the Korean church now should pray for reunification of the Korean peninsula, and work earnestly with the people. The church, the body of Christ, should be one and healthy with the power of Christ, and give the strength of life to the society. Agreement of the church and Missio Dei will be completed through the ecumenical movement in the future. Evidently, agreement of the church is the core of the Gospel, and will be one of the main tools for the renewal of the Korean church.

The Laity Movement of the Korean Church

Yves Congar, a priest who earnestly dealt with a theology of the laity in a modern sense, points out that the laity always was in a subsidiary position in the church order, but today there is a growing tendency to restore the laity's consciousness and rights.⁵ The lay people

⁵ Yves Congar, Lay People in the Church: A Study for a Theology of Laity, 2nd ed. (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1965), 10.

realize that they are organic and active members in the church for completing the church's mission. This is an urgent church task in the modern society.

Hendrik Kraemer summarizes the reason for the Renaissance of the laity movement in the church all over the world. The reason for the Renaissance of the laity movement is: (1) critical discussion of ecclesiology for the rediscovery of the nature of church; (2) reexamination of Luther's theology; (3) recovery movement of ecumenical oneness of all churches required from retrospection about traditional mission method and theology; (4) God's mission for mobilization of the laity in the rapidly changing world situation; and (5) rethinking the above-mentioned factors as the signs of the time.⁶ In order to make the church healthy and strong in the future, lay people should be in the front line of mission as co-workers with priests.

They believe that they are members of the church as mature Christians religiously.

The Korean church should change the traditional pyramid structure of the church into a netting organization. By arranging more unofficially and horizontally in the mission field, lay people should do their ministry in their place of work and lives as servants. Because the current hierarchical system of the church cannot solve social problems effectively, the netting organization can replace the traditional pyramid system. If lay people share the pastors' ministry with pastors in the church, they will give a great power to practice the growth of the church and the salvation of the society. Lay people have talents and a calling from God more than pastors have. Lay people today want to be Jesus' disciples who have the responsibility and vital power

⁶ Hendrik Kraemer, The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World (London: Harper and Bros., 1938), 9-25.

for God's work. All Christians are called to realize Jesus' ministry through the agreement of the church, service to the world, and announce of God's message to the people.

1 Peter describes as follows: "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ"(10-11).

Summary

In order to overcome current problems of the Korean church, the church should become a true church. The real ministry of the church is to make up the body of Christ in and through, and with the community of God's people, whom God called. Through the recovery of ecclesiology, the church should be a community which educates and practices the importance of human life and values. Also, the church should repent and reform to cleanse its faults. The Korean church needs to be renewed in order to realize God's justice and peace in society.

Reflecting on the split into factions of individual churches and denominations in Korea, the church should form unions and an ecumenical movement. The ecumenical movement of the Korean church now should pray for reunification of the Korean peninsula, working earnestly with the people. Furthermore, lay people should realize that they are organic and active members in the church for completing the church's mission. Therefore, lay people should be in the front line of mission as co-workers with priests.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusions

As I mentioned in the introduction, this project deals with the problem of mission as practiced in the Korean church. Even though the Korean Protestant church has experienced great growth throughout its history, overall there have been some negative effects of this growth. There are some problems in the evangelical work of the Korean church due to its continuing extremely interpersonal approach to people. Korean churches have focused on quantity rather than on quality. Korean churches have been interested in the growth of the congregation and personal materialism. They see this success as a blessing from God on their lives. A more serious problem is that the Korean churches want to be larger churches based on the mentality of materialism. This mentality is very selfish and individualistic. Churches were apt to disregard their responsibility for society. The Korean church did not fully provide moral guidance and spiritual leadership to the society. Even though twenty percent of the population is Christian, the morals of the country are becoming progressively worse. The cause of the continued break-up of Korean churches is due not only to the difference of theology and belief, but also to a desire for personal power, recognition of the church, and regionalism.

I mentioned about the over-all understanding of the church and mission based on the Bible. The church is the gathering of people who are called to worship God, to teach the truth, and to serve God's intention through Jesus Christ. Correct understanding of the ecclesiology enables us to complete the kingdom of God. Also, mission is core of Christianity.

Mission embraces all dimensions of human life: physical, spiritual, personal and interpersonal, communal and social, historical and eternal.

In order to overcome current problems of the Korean church, the church should be visions through a self-examination of the traditions evangelical work in Korea. The church should become a true church. Through the recovery of ecclesiology, the church should be a community which educates and practices the importance of human life and values as well as religious activities. The church is a most powerful instrument which, when implemented, is able to alleviate many social problems and ills. The church is the body of Christ, integrated by many members with diverse functions. Therefore the church should concentrate on spreading not only Christ's message but also the actual meaning of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Also the Korean church should repent and reform to cleanse its faults. The recovery of morality of the Korean church is an urgent issue. The Korean church is called to be renewed in order to realize Jesus' ministry in this society. An ecumenical movement amongs churches and denominations is essential to prevent the split of the church and to aid the renewal of the Korean church. The Korean church should do its duty for reunification of the Korean peninsula. Furthermore, lay people should be co-workers in mission with pastors.

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